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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
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Thesis

HUNEKER AND HUMANISM

by

Myra Ellen Bowers  
(A.B., Smith College, 1919)

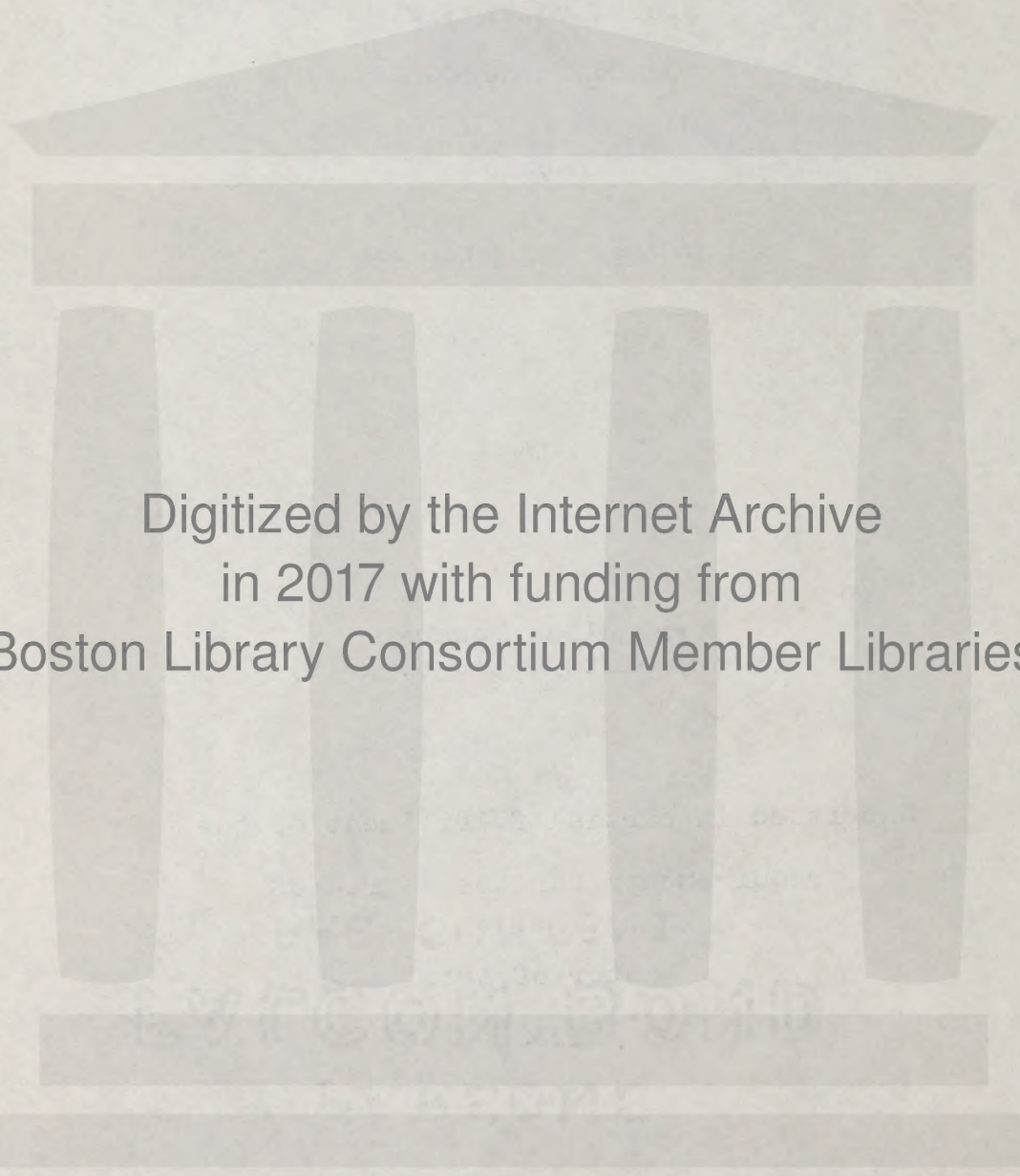
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

1935

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## Huneker and Humanism

### Purpose of the Thesis

Huneker and Humanism--it sounds like a vaudeville duo, Pick and Pat or Lily and Louise, and perhaps it is no more fantastic in its alliteration than in its implication. To the ordinary person Huneker and Humanism are at the opposite ends of the literary criticism scale. Huneker is generally rated as an out-and-out impressionist and the Humanists say this is not enough for a literary critic. One fancies Huneker would be more than amused at this linking and the Humanists only a little less than aghast.

If the subject is such an apparent contradiction, such a coupling of opposites, why should it be attempted? First of all, because, in this writer's opinion, Huneker has never received his just due as an American critic; he was more than a mere impressionist; and there was in his work an aesthetic evaluation of the true, the good, and the beautiful, whether conscious on his part or not.

Why the Humanism in this consideration? Many modern thinkers profess to see in Humanism a way out of the impasse and confusion in which modern theories and practices lie. Romanticism, gone rampant, and its corollaries, Naturism and Behaviorism, leave us no standards with which to judge conduct; thought; progress; life, itself. The Humanists say that there is a norm, a general standard of human endeavor and accomplishment, against

Purpose of the Thesis

Husserl and Humanism--it sounds like a veritable oxymoron and far too early and naive, and perhaps it is so. But the thesis in its entirety is a work of imagination. To the ordinary person Husserl and humanism are at the opposite ends of the literary critical scale. Husserl is generally noted as an out-and-out impressionist and the humanists say this is not enough for a literary critic. The thesis however would be more than amused at this thinking and the humanists only a little less than amazed.

If the subject is such an apparent contradiction, even a coupling of opposites, why should it be attempted? First of all, because, in this writer's opinion, Husserl has never received his just due as an American critic; he was more than a mere impressionist; and there was in his work an aesthetic evaluation of the true, the good, and the beautiful, whether conscious or not.

Any one who reads in this consideration? Many would think it useless to see in humanism a way out of the impasse and confusion in which modern theories and practices lie. Humanism, gone rampant, and its corollaries, historicism and relativism, leave us no standards with which to judge conduct; thought; progress; life, itself. The humanists say that there is a new, a general standard of human endeavor and accomplishment, against



which the tendencies of the times may be evaluated. We may never rise above this welter in which the world finds itself except by properly appraising man's (man as a human being) place in it, by giving to man his proper beliefs and belongings and discarding the things which have no representative, long-run, human values. In so doing, we would not neglect the consideration of the component parts of man's nature, the essential dualism of mind and matter, the human and the animal, which make up man. We must use these opposing tendencies to weld a rule, a guide, a philosophy of life which shall be proof against all the evils that beset us in the present or that may come after. The banking and money collapse are only the outward evidences of a general re-settling of our civilization level. The uncertainty in every line of endeavor is probably the evidence of a general cultural as well as material breakdown. Whether it is, or not, we need Humanism, say the Humanists, to show us some meaning and purpose in all the cross-currents which seize us, to furnish us with a way of life.

"In a century that seems unlikely to achieve a great religious revival, the fundamental conflict may well turn out to be one between a modern naturalism seeking further developments and applications of scientific technique, and a new humanism based upon the whole of human experience." 1.

Humanism is in the air, an old thing, yet new, with the vitality that anything which pertains to humanity possesses. This is the reason for the present stir about humanism. Its prominence is the reason for linking it with the name of Hunecker in our

1. Norman Foerster--Towards Standards, Preface.







attempt to appraise his work.

### Making the Problem as Compact as Possible

Humanism being based on humanity seems to mean almost all things to all men. It is subject to all possible variations and interpretations and in itself seems to furnish an example of the impossibility of applying definite systems of philosophy to haphazard humanity. Humanists disagree greatly among themselves as to its implications and manifestations. Much of the current discussion of Humanism is caused by its advocates' attempting to establish some common ground of agreement as to what it means and what it entails. Obviously, within the limits of this thesis we shall be unable to attempt any adjustment between the various groups of Humanists or any dogmatic assertion as to what Humanism really is. Rather, we shall try to ascertain the qualities which should be present in a critic of humanistic tendencies and see how near to or how far from those standards Huneker's contributions came.

In so doing, for the purposes of more exact application, we shall limit ourselves to Huneker's essays on literature, omitting the work on music, painting, sculpture, the short stories, and the novel; and from these literary criticism essays we shall select two on English literature to show in detail Huneker's method and how it approached or avoided humanistic treatment; viz., The Quintessence of Shaw, in Iconoclasts, and A Note on Henry James, in Unicorns. For the purpose of comparison with a critique on the same subject by a Humanist,





we shall consider The Baudelaire Legend, in Egoists. In considering humanistic ideas throughout the body of Huneker's work we shall take the examples of such ideas from the essays in which they appear. From the same sources we shall take examples of anti-humanistic (romantic) ideas. In view of the immense versatility of the man, we should be neglecting too much of his thought did we confine ourselves to the literary essays wholly, and yet, because we are considering how a humanistic literary critic would work, it seems best to consider the more familiar subjects to determine whether or not Huneker reached a representative, human judgment. The limiting and simplifying of the problem will aid us in the determination.

Secondly, let us state that we agree with Dr. C. F. Johnson that a critic needs function, equipment, criterion, method; that the critic should have the power of generalization and should answer the question: Is the work of art worth while. Objectives of the Humanistic Critic

For the particular equipment of the humanistic critic and authority as Rogers Cooper in his Humanistic Criticism will give with the essentials: 1.

The critic as interpreter the humanistic attempts to a work of art must never

1. Criticism in America, page 31

2. Rogers Cooper-Humanistic Criticism, page 122





### A Working Definition of Humanism

First of all, let us get a working definition of Humanism in order to see what qualities the humanistic critic should possess. Humanism is a system of philosophy which takes particular cognizance of man's human qualities, including his status in the universe (between animal and God) and the duality of his nature (his physical and mental endowment) and maintains that man, with his human equipment, particularly his mentality, which is peculiarly human, is capable of working out whatever problems may come to him. On the literary side, it maintains that a work of art is great in so far as it embodies these concepts of man's humanity with proportion and discrimination and with emphasis upon long-run, universal values. It venerates the classics as the embodiments of principles which are essentially humanistic in that they have proved true for all men in all ages.

Secondly, let us state that we agree with W. C. Brownell that a critic needs function, equipment, criterion, method; that the critic should have the power of generalization and should answer the question: Is the work of art worth while? 1.

### Objectives of the Humanistic Critic

For the particular equipment of the humanistic critic such authority as Norman Foerster in his Toward Standards will furnish the essentials: 2.

The critic to interpret the humanistic aspects of a work of art must have:

1. Criticism in America, Page 88
2. Norman Foerster--Toward Standards, Page 186

## A Working Definition of Humanism

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For the particular equipment of the humanistic critic such authority as Norman Foerster in his Toward Standards will furnish the essentials: 2.

The critic to interpret the humanistic aspect of a work

of art must have:

1. Criticism in America, page 88
2. Norman Foerster--Toward Standards, page 122



### 1. Historical understanding

This is the understanding born of knowledge of the author's place in the general history of time, thought, place, and idea. With this knowledge as a background, the critic should try to remove the historical barrier between the artist and reader. The critic is to use the Taine yardstick of interpreting the artist's offering in the light of his milieu in race, place, and time but he is not to be content with this. He is to go beyond this explanation and set up a foundation for the later criticism, for the inevitable general interpretation in the light of all factors.

### 2. Understanding Born of Sympathy

The critic must not only understand, appreciate, and interpret the artist's milieu; he must supplement these with an understanding, born of sympathy, of the artist's motive and intention. In so far as possible he will put himself in the author's place toward the end of judging the book as an expression of the author's intention.

### 3. Judgment

The critic must judge the artist's book:

- a. Quantitatively To do this, the critic will answer the question: In what degree has the author succeeded in carrying out his artistic intention? The critic's ability to answer





this question will rest upon his ability to gauge the author's intention as revealed to him by knowledge and sympathy.

- b. Qualitatively To judge the book qualitatively the critic must answer the question: What kind of beauty does the book possess? He must question here not only the author's intention but the object itself. The critic's criterion here will be the nature of things, things as they are, in other words, the representative, human values of the work of art.

### The Quintessence of Shaw

Bearing these qualities and standards of equipment in mind, let us consider first Huneker's treatment of Bernard Shaw as shown in The Quintessence of Shaw in Iconoclasts.<sup>1</sup>

### Regarding the Understanding Born of Knowledge

Huneker gives us plenty of personal premises for his estimate of Shaw. He was the first in this country to write of Shaw in 1888. In 1890 he was instrumental in the purchase of an article of Shaw's on the forerunners of the piano for The Musical Courier.<sup>2</sup> They met several times in Europe and had correspondence particularly regarding an author's note concerning Candida in a letter from Shaw to Huneker. He tells us, as the humanistic critic should, that Shaw is Hibernian; Fabian; vegetarian; teetotaller; Wagnerite; Ibsenite; playwright; critic (literary and musical); preacher; lycanthrope; misogynist; a

1. Iconoclasts, Page 233

2. Steeplejack, Volume 2, Page 257





pioneer in his championship of Wagner, Richard Strauss, Manet and Degas; a philistine; and a jester. Shaw is poor, ascetic, kind-hearted, generous, puritanical, courteous, courageous, a user of paradoxes, and addicted to posing. He even gives us a pedigree for Shaw: "W. S. Gilbert out of Ibsen."<sup>1</sup> Here we have ample data for understanding the human entity that is Shaw.

### Regarding the Understanding Born of Sympathy

Huneker has sympathetic understanding of Shaw's personality and aims. He tells us that Shaw is normally abnormal, though Shaw prides himself on being absolutely normal. Shaw is always blarneying, removing masks one after another, or pretending to, though Huneker warns us that even this posing may be a pose. He confidently believes Shaw is a sentimentalist in private and that his brutality of speech is only a defence mechanism for his sentimentality, though, of course, Huneker does not use this term for the phenomenon. Shaw, he maintains, seems to despise a sense of beauty. He despises weakness and follows Nietzsche's injunction to be hard.

Shaw he sees as a saintly (in his conduct) anarch but one using half-hearted means of destruction of the old order, never going whole-hog at his uprooting. Instead, says Huneker, he has

"spent his time tilting at flagellation, at capital punishment, at the abuse of punctuation, at the cannibalistic habit of eating the flesh of harmless animals at Christmas, at going to church, extolling Czolgoz--heavens! the list is a league long."<sup>2</sup>

Shaw, according to Huneker, hates to hear of the infliction of physical pain yet does not spare his readers mental

1. Iconoclasts, Page 233

2. Ibid., Page 240







torture. Shaw is a reformer.

"He will rob himself of his last copper to give you food, and will belabor you with words that assault the tympanum if you disagree with him on the subject of Ibsen, Wagner or anything he likes." 1.

Shaw refuses to see women as heroines and makes of them things which most women are not.

Surely our critic here understands and sympathizes. He has interpreted his head data by his heart promptings. Whatever conclusions we find Huneker reaching regarding this man, it cannot be said that he has failed to trace his background or been remiss in considering all the data to arrive at his judgment of Shaw's work.

#### Quantitative Judgment

How has Shaw carried out his artistic intentions in Huneker's eyes? To Huneker, Shaw is delightful and entertaining. "His facile use, with the aid of the various mouthpieces he assumes, of the ideas of Nietzsche, Wagner, Ibsen and Strindberg fairly dazzles." 2. Shaw has been able to bring into England by his manner of telling "all manners of damnable doctrines" for which people of more orthodox manner of presentation have been condemned.

Huneker says Shaw's plays prove something "and prove it so hard that presently the play is swallowed up by the thesis--the horse patiently follows the cart. It may not be art, but it is magnificent Shaw." 3. In such a presentation the structures of the plays and the characters suffer. Shaw succeeds in putting

1. Iconoclasts, Page 241
2. Ibid., Page 237
3. Ibid., Page 243





over his ideas but at the cost of unconvincing characters.

"His people are mostly a blackguard crew of lively marionettes, talking pure Shawese. Mr. Shaw has invented a new individual in literature who for want of a better name could be called the Super-Cad; he is Nietzsche's Superman turned 'bounder'--and sometimes the sex is feminine." 1.

With Shaw's continual "trickstering" and "kidding" one gets the feeling that he doesn't mean a word he says. He sacrifices sincerity for "smartness." For, says Huneker, "To be impertinent is not necessarily an evidence of wisdom; nor does the dazzling epigram supply the missing note of humanity." 2. Shaw is trying, as Huneker believes, to condense the cosmos into a formula with his sharp sayings. Huneker says it can't be done.

So far, our critic has shown where Shaw attains his objectives and where he falls short of so doing, pointing out the losses or gains entailed by each success or failure.

#### Qualitative Judgment

Huneker's final evaluation of Shaw is one which could stand for a present-day pronouncement upon G. B. S.'s worth in literature. One should bear in mind that these estimates date from as remote a date as 1905. These are no statements reclothed and dressed up-to-date by means of critical values and estimates which have come into being since Huneker's early judgment.

#### Summary of Huneker's Evaluation of Shaw

Briefly summarized, Huneker says that Shaw's books are





tracts for Shavian ideas. Shaw is after what seems to him the truth at all costs; he wears the "stout spectacles of common sense." Shaw does not believe in the illusions of art so his dramas are "amusing, witty, brilliant, scarefying, but never poetic, never beautiful and seldom sound the deeper tones of humanity."<sup>1.</sup>

Caesar and Cleopatra, "a bubbling study of antiquity,"<sup>2.</sup> would entitle Shaw to ranking with Mark Twain.

Shaw's prefaces, in Huneker's opinion, will some day be classics. They will be remembered with joy when the plays are forgotten.

"Velocity is one of Shaw's prime characteristics. Like a pianoforte virtuoso whose fingers work faster than his feelings, the Irishman is lost when he essays massive, sonorous cantilena. He is as emotional as his own typewriter, and this defect, which he parades as did the fox in the fable, has stood in the way of his writing a great play. He despises love and therefore cannot appeal deeply to mankind."<sup>3.</sup> . . . "And instead of closely observing humanity after the manner of all great dramatists, he has only closely studied Bernard Shaw."<sup>4.</sup>

After all these years, who would change this estimate in searching for a genuine one on Shaw? Here is the typical Huneker critique. Hasn't it fulfilled the three critical estimates of Matthew Arnold, the personal (impressionistic), the historical (environmental), the real (humanistic)? To be sure, the material is not in this uninteresting order. The final judgment may come between two sense impressions in the first

1. Iconoclasts, Page 242

2. Ibid., Page 248

3. Ibid., Page 266

4. Ibid., Page 266





sentence; Huneker may digress to remark upon what somebody said under similar or opposite circumstances or what the equivalent in music would be; but before he finishes we get not only visual, and audible, but also (sometimes) olefactory impressions of what the work is like; why the author happens to write this way, if there is a real reason; and, always, some interpretation of this man's contribution to the world store of literature. In making this final estimate Huneker does not use philosophical jargon; he does not talk of "the ethical will" or "the superior imagination" of the Humanists but one feels sure that some higher authority within him has functioned to give us the rational, representative, valid judgment which he always does. We must recall that most of these articles were written for the newspapers or magazines under tremendous time-pressure and often not greatly changed for book publication. Under these conditions, why should we expect any final judgment at all from a man who is rated as an impressionist and nothing else? Where was the compulsion upon him to take a critical stand unless within his own temperament?

#### A Note on Henry James

Let us consider the case of another literary figure treated by Huneker. This time it is Henry James. The article is entitled A Note on Henry James, written after James's death during the World War. It is found in Unicorns, which was published in 1917. To follow the plan for the humanistic critic:

...; however, any attempt to search upon what somebody said  
under a kind of opposite circumstance or what the equivalent  
is made really bad; but rather he finished we had not only time  
at, and another, but also (sometimes) of a very different  
way, the work is like; but the matter happens to be the same  
way, it is a real reality and, always, some interpretation  
of this man's contribution to the world scene of literature.  
In making this final sentence, however, does not use philosophical  
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A Note on Henry James

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called A Note on Henry James, written after James's death dur-  
ing the World War. It is found in Answers, which was published  
in 1917. To follow the plan for the historical critic:



### Regarding the Understanding Born of Knowledge

Huneker is at pains to tell us that Henry James was as American, essentially, as Howells, in spite of his appearing and acting more English than the English and in spite of his being a cosmopolitan. Huneker tells us that James was born in New England but failed to possess what is called a New England conscience. As the son of a metaphysician and moralist and the brother of the famous psychologist, William James, Huneker thinks it was natural that Henry James should be concerned with psychological problems and clashes of character.

He even makes an attempt to account for the elliptical manner in James's work, tracing it to Flaubert, who planed and stripped his style of all unnecessary verbiage, and to James's habit of dictating, saying, "The pen inhibits where speech does not." Huneker, who could neither dictate nor typewrite and who wrote all his myriad words in longhand, should know!

James's "sometime-oblique psychology" he ascribes to the influence of Stendhal.<sup>1.</sup>

### Regarding the Understanding Born of Sympathy

Huneker, with his vast understanding of humanity, sets up for us a sympathetic picture of James. James, he would have us understand, is not all "frosty intellect. But he holds in horror the facile expression of the sentiments."<sup>2.</sup> James has "deep-veined humanity."<sup>3.</sup> He is concerned with moral purposes. "Like Renan," says Huneker, "he abhorred 'the horrible mania of

1. Unicorns, Page 55

2. Ibid., Page 65

3. Ibid., Page 58

Regarding the Understanding of the

Hummer is no more to be said as last Henry James was an  
 essential, as essential, as essential, as essential, as essential,  
 and seeing more clearly than the English and in spite of his  
 being a cosmopolitan. Hummer said as that James was born in  
 New England but failed to mention that is called a New England  
 cosmopolitan. As the son of a cosmopolitan and novelist and the  
 brother of the famous psychologist, William James, Hummer  
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 psychological problems and classes of character.

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 influence of Freud.

Regarding the Understanding of the

Hummer, with his best understanding of psychology, says to  
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 understand, is not all "freely intellect". But he fails to un-  
 derstand the fact's expression of the sentiment. James has  
 "deep-veined humanity." As is concerned with human purposes.  
 "This human," says Hummer, "is expressed in the humanistic sense of



certitude.'" <sup>1.</sup>

Huneker laments the fact that James's change in citizenship may have caused a coolness toward him. "That he did not find all the perfections in his native land is a personal matter," says Huneker. <sup>2.</sup>

Huneker wishes us to comprehend the James style:

"These things [the elliptical manner] make difficult reading for a public accustomed to the hypnotic passes of successful fiction-mongers. In James nothing is fore-stalled, nothing is obvious, one is forever turning the curve of the unexpected." <sup>3.</sup> . . . "The spiritual string music of Henry James is more thrilling to the educated ear than the sound of the big drum and the blaring of trumpets." <sup>4.</sup> . . . "His ears are for over-tones, not the brassy harmonies of the obvious, of truths, flat, and flexible." <sup>5.</sup>

Regarding James's choice of subject he is, as usual, charitable.

"The implacable curiosity of the novelists concerning causes that do not seem final has been amply dealt with by Mr. Brownell. The question whether his story is worth the telling is a critical impertinence too often uttered; what concerns us now in the James case is his manner, not his matter. All the rest is life." <sup>6.</sup>

Huneker tells us that some of the critics, particularly Ford Madox Hueffer, have been wrong in ascribing Puritanism to James merely because of his New England birth. In spite of the fact, according to Huneker, that there is less Puritanism in New England than in the Middle West, James is not a Puritan.

"To ascribe to Puritanism the seven deadly virtues and refinement, sensibility, intellectuality, is a common enough mistake. James never made that mistake. He knew that all the good things of life are not in the exclusive possession of the Puritans." . . . "With the prudishness and peanut piety of Puritanism Henry James has nothing in common." <sup>7.</sup>

1. Unicorns, Page 63  
2. Ibid., Page 53  
3. Ibid., Page 55  
4. Ibid., Page 56

5. Ibid., Page 64  
6. Ibid., Page 56  
7. Ibid., Pages 60 and 61







Huneker says that none of the things contained in the two famous epigrams about James is true. One of the epigrams relates that Henry James went to France and read Turgenev and that Howells stayed at home and read Henry James; the other maintains that William James was the fictionist and his brother Henry, the psychologist.<sup>1</sup>

Our critic thinks that James would have winced at reading Hueffer's statement that he was "the greatest of living men." He also takes issue with some of Hueffer's (or Ford's) statements which he brands as superlatives or overstatements.

#### Quantitative Judgment

As to whether James attained his objectives:

"The actual story may be discouraging in its bareness, yet the situations are seldom fantastic. (The Turn of the Screw is an exception.) You rub your eyes as you finish; for with all your credulity, painful in its intensity, you have assisted at a pictorial evocation; both picture and evocation reveal magic in their misty attenuations. And there is ever the triumph of poetic feeling over banal sentiment." 2.

"As far as his middle period his manner is limpidity itself; the later style is a jungle of inversions, suspensions, elisions, repetitions, echoes, transpositions, transformations, neologisms, in which the heads of young adjectives despairingly gaze from afar at the verbs which come thundering at the close of sentences leagues long. It is bewildering, but more bewildering is this peculiarly individual style when draughted into smooth journalistic prose. Nothing remains. Henry James has not spoken. His dissonances cannot be resolved except in the terms of his own matchless art. His meanings evaporate when phrased in our vernacular." 3.

"Yet no matter how crabbed and involved is his page, a character always emerges from the smoke of his muttered enchantments. The chief fault is not his

1. Unicorns, Page 61
2. Ibid., Page 55
3. Ibid., Pages 56 and 57







obscurity (his prose, like the prose in Browning's Sordello, is packed with too many meanings), but that his characters always speak in purest Jacobean." 1.

"His theme is shown from a variety of angles, but the result is synthetic. Elizabeth Luther Cary has pointed out that he is not a remorseless analyst. He does not take the mechanism of his marionette apart, but lets us examine it in completeness." 2.

"it need hardly be added that character problems are of more interest to this novelist than the external qualities of rhetorical sonority, or the fascination of glowing surfaces." 3.

In short, Huneker says that James is a psychologist as well as a novelist and succeeds in spite of surface obscurity in giving us a clear picture of his characters. We trace their motives and their musings and get a complete idea of the personality involved, the interior promptings as well as the front they present to the world. The characters complicate our problem of understanding them by talking after the manner of James, but, says Huneker, "So do the people in Balzac's crowded, electric world. So the men and women of Dickens and Meredith. It is the fault--or virtue--of all subjective genius; however, not a fault or virtue of Flaubert or Turgenev or Tolstoy." 4.

#### Qualitative Judgment

Huneker says that James's fiction is for the future. His neglect in his own time is only "the penalty which a great artist pays for his devotion to his art. There is no need of indignation in the matter. Time rights such critical wrongs. Consider the case of Stendhal. The fiction of Henry James is for the future." 5. He goes on to tell us:

1. Unicorns, Page 58  
2. Ibid., Page 65  
3. Ibid., Page 57

4. Ibid., Page 58  
5. Ibid., Page 53







"James seceded years ago from the English traditions, from Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot. The Wings of a Dove, The Ambassadors, The Golden Bowl are fictions that will influence future novelists. . . A marked tendency in the new movements is to throw overboard superfluous technical baggage. The James novel is one of grand simplifications." 1.

"Henry James is a law unto himself. His novels may be a precursor of the books our grandchildren will enjoy when the hurly-burly of noisy adventure, cheap historical vapidities and still cheaper drawing-room struttings shall have vanished." 2.

Even in their own times, according to Huneker, Henry James has been a "subtle breath on the waters of creation." 3. He has influenced Paul Bourget, Edith Wharton, and Joseph Conrad.

James, to Huneker, is a psychologist of "extraordinary power and divination," interpreting feeling instead of fact, and a portraitist in addition. He is a master tale-teller. James is all vision,

"His astute senses tell him of a world which we are only beginning to comprehend." 4. "When reading him sympathetically one recalls the saying of Maurice Barres: 'For an accomplished spirit there is but one dialogue, that between our two egos--the momentary ego that we are and the ideal one toward which we strive.'" . . . "Henry James will always be a touchstone for the tasteless." 5.

#### Summary of Huneker's Evaluation of James

Here again we have the attempt to place a general value upon an artist's work; we have knowledge, sympathy, insight, and evaluation. And the result is luminous, which it probably would not have been, had the critique been overly devoted to psychological, metaphysical factors. Huneker was such a vibrantly-strung soul he caught many modulations which would have

1. Unicorns, Page 54
2. Ibid., Page 57
3. Ibid., Page 54

4. Ibid., Page 64
5. Ibid., Page 66



"...second years ago from the English tradition, from Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot. The Wings of a Dove, The Ambassadors, The Golden Bowl and The American are all influenced by these novelists. . . . I raised tendency in the new movement is to show overboard sentimental technical baggage. The James novel is one of great simplifications." 1.

"Henry James is a law unto himself. His novels may be a precursor of the books our grandchildren will enjoy when the hurry-gurry of noisy adventures, cheap fiction, local varieties and stiff chapter, drawing-room structure shall have vanished." 2.

Even in their own times, according to Munster, Henry James has been a "subtle breath on the waters of creation." He has

influenced Paul Bourget, Edith Wharton, and Joseph Conrad. James, to Munster, is a psychologist of "extraordinary power and divination," "interpreting feeling instead of fact, and a portraitist in addition. He is a master tale-teller. James is all vision."

"His essays tell him of a world which we are only beginning to comprehend." 4. "When reading him sympathetically one recalls the saying of Marcellus: 'For an accomplished spirit there is but one dialogue, that between our two egos--the momentary ego that we are and the ideal one toward which we strive.'" 5. "Henry James will always be a touchstone for the aesthetes."

### Summary of Munster's Evaluation of James

Here again we have the attempt to place a general value upon an artist's work; we have knowledge, sympathy, insight, and evaluation. And the result is incisive, which it probably would not have been, had the critique been overly devoted to psychological, metaphysical factors. Munster was such a vi-  
sionary-staring soul he caught many sensations which would have



escaped a minor critic. Sometimes these tags of impression were worth nothing; and, if he thought they were, he told you so. Sometimes, however, they proved the "open sesame" to the door of complete understanding.

The point is, that whether these hints were or were not of value, Huneker was not content with them for his thesis. He compared them with other impressions; he weighed them in the light of his own vast knowledge and his fellow-feeling for the author and gave them to us, not in any didactic presentation or with any pronouncements as to their unalterable value. Huneker was too wise and tolerant for that. They came as the opinions of Huneker, the man, and certainly as a human person he was qualified to be the clearing-house for any human values, even though formulae and general ideas did not concern him.

#### Criticisms of Shaw and James Typical of Huneker's Evaluations

These two articles, The Quintessence of Shaw and A Note on Henry James, have shown that Huneker covered the objectives laid down for the humanistic critic in Toward Standards. They are typical Huneker estimates. Any Huneker critique will show, in greater or less degree, the evidence of the possession by the critic of standards of judgment.

Huneker's is a more general and longer treatment. It tells of Mendelssohn's life, his compositions, and his personal life. Mendelssohn's work is appraised in its entirety including his critical efforts and the Poems in Prose. Huneker gives us his usual well-rounded conception of Mendelssohn.

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## Comparison of Baudelaire in Egoists with T. S. Eliot's Baudelaire in Our Time

It may be interesting and purposeful for the object of our study to compare a present-day Humanist's treatment of a subject with Huneker's of 1909. T. S. Eliot in For Lancelot Andrewes has a short article entitled Baudelaire in Our Time. Huneker considered Baudelaire the greatest French poet of the 19th century after Hugo and writes of him in detail in Egoists. For the purpose of easier visualization, we shall arrange the selections from both sources in parallel formation.

Eliot's main theme is that Arthur Symon's translation of Baudelaire, Baudelaire, Prose and Poetry, makes Baudelaire seem a poet of the '90's like Dowson and Wilde. Eliot says Baudelaire did not belong to the nineties or the romantic era which followed. He belongs to our own day and that of the antecedents of the nineties. He complains of Symon's comments on Baudelaire as being characteristic of the nineties and disputes him on several points; viz., Baudelaire's concern with vice, his religious leanings, his choice of words. Eliot says Baudelaire was a Christian and a classicist, born out of his time, and nearer to us than to Symons.

Huneker's is a more general and longer treatment. It tells of Baudelaire's life, his eccentricities, and his normalities. Baudelaire's work is appraised in its entirety including his critical efforts and the Poems in Prose. Huneker gives us his usual well-rounded conception of Baudelaire.

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## Parallels in the Two Essays

The parallels in both follow and speak for themselves:

### Modernism of Baudelaire

Eliot: The translation would be good if our point of view were that of thirty years ago. Symons makes him a poet of the nineties like Dowson and Wilde. Baudelaire is great enough to appear in such different form to the nineties and the 1920's. He belonged to the generation preceding the nineties and yet he is much more our contemporary than they are. Even the nineties are nearer to us than the intervening generation of Shaw, Wells, Lytton Strachey. Baudelaire had nothing to do with the intervening generation. 1.

Huneker: "He was the last of the Romanticists; Sainte-Beuve called him the Kamtachatka of Romanticism; its remotest hyperborean peak. Romanticism is dead today, as dead as Naturalism, but Baudelaire is alive and is read." . . . . "Heine called himself the last of the Romantics. The first of the moderns and the last of the Romantics was the many-sided Charles Baudelaire." 2.

### Baudelaire's Attitude Toward Vice

Eliot says Symons shows the typical attitude toward vice of the generation to which he belonged. He finds it's almost a matter of ritual in Baudelaire. The present generation does not find it so. 3. Huneker says of Baudelaire's vicious gatherings that they were probably much less wicked than the participants would have us believe. 4.

Eliot believes that Baudelaire was not a dupe to passions but the opposite. Eliot says Baudelaire was trying to explain or justify them, which puts him on a level with Dante. 5.

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. For Lancelot Andrewes, Page 91 | 4. Egoists, Page 83               |
| 2. Egoists, Page 75               | 5. For Lancelot Andrewes, Page 95 |
| 3. For Lancelot Andrewes, Page 93 |                                   |







Huneker: "A lover of Gallic Byronism and high-priest of the Satanic school, there was no extravagance, absurd or terrible, that he did not commit, from etching a four-part fugue on ice to skating hymns in honor of Lucifer." 1. . . . "In the heyday of his blood he was perverse and deliberate. Let us credit him with contradicting the Byronic notion that ennui could best be cured by dissipation; in sin Baudelaire found the saddest of all tasks." 2. . . . "He proved all things and found them vanity." 3. . . . "What the majority of mankind does not know concerning the habits of literary workers is this prime fact: men who work hard, writing verse--and there is no mental toil comparable to it--cannot drink, or indulge in opium, without the inevitable collapse. The old-fashioned ideas of "inspiration," spontaneity, easy improvisation, the sudden bolt from heaven, are delusions still hugged by the world. To be told that Chopin filed at his music for years, that Beethoven in his smithy forged his thunderbolts, that Manet toiled like a labourer on the dock, that Baudelaire was a mechanic in his devotion to poetic work, that Gautier was a hard-working journalist, is a disillusion for the sentimental. Minerva springing full-fledged from Jupiter's skull to the desk of the poet is a pretty fancy; but Balzac and Flaubert did not encourage this fancy. Work literally killed Poe, as it killed Jules de Goncourt, Flaubert, and Daudet. Maupassant went insane because he would work and he would play the same day. Baudelaire worked and worried. His debts haunted him his life long. His constitution was flawed--Sainte-Beuve told him that he had worn out his nerves--from the start, he was *détraqué*; but that his entire life was one huge debauch is a nightmare of the moral police in some white-cotton-night-cap country." 4.

#### Lucidity of Baudelaire

Eliot affirms that Baudelaire was not hysterical but lucid.  
5.

Huneker: "In Bayard Taylor's The Echo Club we find on Page 24 this criticism: 'There was a congenital twist about Poe. . . . Baudelaire and Swinburne after him have been trying to surpass him by increasing the dose; but his muse is the natural Pythia, inheriting her convulsions, while they eat all sorts of insane roots to produce theirs.' This must have been written about 1872, and after reading it one would fancy Poe and Baudelaire were rhapsodic wrigglers on the poetic tripod, whereas their poetry is often reserved, even glacial. Baudelaire, like Poe, sometimes built his nests with the 'birds of night,' and that was enough to condemn the work of both men with critics of the

1. Egoists, Page 87
2. Ibid., Page 93
3. Ibid., Page 75

4. Ibid., Page 94
5. For Lancelot Andrewes, Page 95



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 police in some white-washed-night-say country." 3.

### Facility of Baudelaire

Elliot affirms that Baudelaire was not hysterical but in-

3.

old.

"In Bayard Taylor's The Echo Club we find on page  
 24 this criticism: 'There was a congenital twist  
 about Poe. . . . Baudelaire and Swinburne after him have  
 been trying to surpass him by increasing the dose; but his  
 was the natural Pythia, inheriting her convulsions,  
 while they eat all sorts of insane roots to produce theirs.'  
 This must have been written about 1872, and after reading  
 it one would fancy Poe and Baudelaire were rhapsodic and  
 close on the poetic tripod, whereas their poetry is often  
 reserved, even glacial. Baudelaire, like Poe, sometimes  
 built his masts with the 'birds of night,' and that was  
 enough to condemn the work of both men with critics of the



didactic school." 1.

And again, "Baudelaire is a masculine poet. He carved rather than sang; the plastic arts spoke to his soul. A lover and maker of images. Like Poe, his emotions transformed themselves into ideas. Bourget classified him as a mystic, a libertine, and an analyst."2.

### "Heredity and Nerves" in Baudelaire

Eliot tells us that Symons says that Baudelaire's impeccable work was the result of "heredity and nerves." Eliot goes on to say that any work, if it is the result of heredity and nerves, is not impeccable. [This sounds like quibbling.] We cannot be interested in any writer's heredity and nerves except to see how that distorts his objective truth. If a writer sees truly, then his heredity and nerves do not matter. 3.

Huneker, on the other hand, indicates that there was an affection of the nervous entity:

"By his first marriage the elder Baudelaire had one son, Claude, who, like his half-brother, Charles, died of paralysis, though a steady man of business. That great neurosis, called Commerce, has its mental wrecks, too, but no one pays attention; only when the poet falls by the wayside is the chase begun by neurologists and other soul-hunters seeking for victims." 4.

"He [Baudelaire] never reached peace on his heights. Let us admit that souls of his kind are encased in sick frames, their steel is too shrewd for the scabbard; yet the enigma for us is none the less fathomable. Existence for such natures is sort of a muffled delirium. To affiliate him with Poe, De Quincey, Hoffmann, James Thomson, Coleridge, and the rest of the sombre choir does not explain him; he is, perhaps, nearer Donne and Villon than any of the others -- strains of the metaphysical and sinister are to be discovered in him." 5.

"Being of a perverse nature, his nerves ruined by abuse of drink and drugs, the landscapes of his imagination or those

1. Egoists, Page 72

2. Ibid., Page 97

3. For Lancelot Andrewes, Page

4. Egoists, Page 91

5. Ibid., Page 79



And again, "Baudelaire is a masculine poet. He devoted rather than sang; the classic was more to him than the lover and maker of images. Like Poe, his emotion transformed themselves into ideas. Baudelaire classified him as a mystic, a libertine, and an analyst."

"Nervosity and Nerves" in Baudelaire

Eliot tells us that Baudelaire says that Baudelaire's impulsive work was the result of "nervosity and nerves." "Eliot goes on to say that any work, if it is the result of nervosity and nerves, is not impenetrable. [This sounds like going blind.] We cannot be interested in any writer's nervosity and nerves except to see how that disorder affects his objective vision. If a writer sees truly, then his nervosity and nerves do not matter."

Further, on the other hand, indicates that there was an effect of the nervous system:

"By his first marriage the older Baudelaire had one son, Claude, who, like his half-brother, Charles, died of paralysis, though a steady man of business. That great nervous, called Comma, has its mental weakness, too, but no one pays attention; only when the poet falls by the wayside is the cause begun by neurologists and other soul-hunters seeking for victims."

"He [Baudelaire] never reached peace on his nights. Let us admit that some of his night and evening in sick frames, their souls is too shadowed for the sun; but the night for us is more the less rational. Resistance for such nature is sort of a unified belief. To illustrate him with Poe, De Quincey, Hoffman, James Thomson, Coleridge, and the rest of the somber choir does not explain him; he is, perhaps, nearer Keats and Milton than any of the others--a certain of the metaphysical and sinister eye to be discovered in him."

"Being of a perverse nature, his nerves ruined by abuse of drink and drugs, the landscapes of his imagination of those



by his friend, Rousseau, were more beautiful than Nature herself." 1.

### Sin Cult in Baudelaire

Eliot says that there was no religion of sin with which  
2.  
Baudelaire was concerned.

Huneker would probably be the first to deny that there is ever a religion of sin; yet he seems to suggest that many of Baudelaire's antics were the result of a cult for the outré and outlandish:

"For the sentimental no greater foe exists than the iconoclast who dissipates literary legends. And he is abroad nowadays."

Legends about Poe's drinking, De Quincey's opium-taking, Charles Lamb's gin-taking, Gautier's red vest at the premiere of *Hernani*, and about Rousseau have been exploded but those about Baudelaire seem indestructible. He says that  
3.  
Baudelaire was partly to blame for the legends.

"In the history of literature, it is difficult to parallel such a deliberate piece of self-stultification." 4. . . . .  
"A dispassionate life of Baudelaire, however, has yet to be written, a noble task for some young poet who will disentangle the conflicting lies originated by Baudelaire--that tragic comedian--from the truth and thus save him from himself." 5.

"As long ago as 1869 and in our 'barbarous gas-lit country,' as Baudelaire named the land of Poe, an unsigned review appeared in which this poet was described as 'unique and interesting as Hamlet. He is that rare and unknown being, a genuine poet--a poet in the midst of things that have disordered his spirit--a poet excessively developed in his taste for and by beauty. . . . very responsive to the ideal, very greedy of sensation.' A better description of Baudelaire does not exist. The Hamlet-motive is one that sounded throughout the disordered symphony of the poet's life." 6

1. Egoists, Page 96

2. For Lancelot Andrewes,  
Page 97

3. Egoists, Page 66

4. Ibid., Page 67

5. Ibid., Page 68

6. Ibid., Page 73



by his friend, Newman, were more beautiful than nature herself." 1.

His Life in England

Elmer says that there was no religion of sin with which

Handel was concerned.

Handel would probably be the first to deny that there is ever a religion of sin; yet he seems to suggest that many of Handel's articles were the result of a cult for the

outer and outward:

"For the sentimental no greater foe exists than the ignorant who dissipated literary legends. And he is shown nowhere."

Legends about Poe's drinking, De Quincey's opium-taking,

Charles Lamb's gin-taking, Gautier's red vest at the press-

are of Herman, and about Newman have been excluded but

those about Handel seem indisputable. He says that

Handel was partly to blame for the legends.

"In the history of literature, it is difficult to parallel such a deliberate piece of self-stultification." 2. . . . "A dissipated life of Handel, however, has yet to be written, a noble task for some young poet who will disentangle the conflicting lines originated by Handel's--that tragic comedian--from the truth and thus save him from his self." 3.

"As long ago as 1885 and in our 'corruptest gas-lit country,' as Handel named the land of Poe, an unsigned review appeared in which this poet was described as 'undone and interesting as Hamlet. He is that rare and unknown being, a genuine poet--a poet in the midst of things that have disordered his spirit--a poet excessively developed in his taste for and by beauty. . . . very responsive to the ideal--very greedy of sensation.' A better description of Handel's life does not exist. The Hamlet-motive is one that sound-ed throughout the distorted sympathy of the poet's life." 4.



"Poe was half-charlatan as was Baudelaire. In both the sublime and sickly were never far asunder. The pair loved to mystify, to play pranks on their contemporaries." 1..

### Baudelaire's Style

Eliot says that what Baudelaire means to Symon's generation is not what he means to ours. We can better appreciate the traditional character of Baudelaire's verse; we are nearer to Racine than is Mr. Symons. Resemblances to Racine are lost in Symon's translation. We should bring those points out today. Symons strives for nice phrasing, Swinburne-colored expressions. Baudelaire was not a disciple of Swinburne. He chose words for their intrinsic meaning 2.

Huneker does not trace out the Racine similarity but has this to say regarding Baudelaire's choice of words:

"Mr. Saintsbury, after Mr. Swinburne, the warmest advocate of Baudelaire among the English, thinks that the French poet in his picture criticism observed too little and imagined too much. 'In other words,' he adds, 'to read a criticism of Baudelaire's without the title affixed is by no means a sure method of recognizing the picture afterward.' 3. . . . We do not agree with Mr. Saintsbury. No one can imagine too much when the imagination is that of a poet. Baudelaire divined the work of the artist and set it down scrupulously in prose of rectitude. He did not paint pictures in prose. He did not divagate. He did not overburden his pages with technical terms. But the spirit he did disengage in a few swift phrases." 4.

### Baudelaire's Christianity

Eliot: Baudelaire was a Christian, born out of his time and a classicist born out of his time. Baudelaire was not an aesthetic or a political Christian; his tendency toward ritual comes from the instincts of a soul naturally Christian and born when he was he had to discover Christianity

1. Egoists. Page 73

3. Egoists, Page 84

3. For Lancelot Andrewes, Page 4. Ibid., Page 85



"For was half-converted as was Baudelaire. In both the subtle and subtly were the number. The pair loved to mystify, to play games on their consciousness." 1.

Baudelaire's Style

What says that what Baudelaire means to Symon's generation is not what he means to ours. We can better appreciate the traditional character of Baudelaire's verse; we are nearer to feeling than is Mr. Symon. Resemblances to Keats are lost in Symon's translation. We should bring these points out today. Symon survives for nice phrasing, Swinburne-colored expressions. Baudelaire was not a disciple of Swinburne. He chose words for their intrinsic meaning. Baudelaire does not trace out the machine similarity but has this to say regarding Baudelaire's choice of words:

"Mr. Salicrú, after Mr. Swinburne, the warmest advocate of Baudelaire among the English, thinks that the French poet in his historic criticism observed too little and imagined too much. 'In other words,' he adds, 'to read a criticism of Baudelaire's without the little added is by no means a sure method of recognizing the picture afterwards.' We do not agree with Mr. Salicrú. No one can imagine too much when the imagination is that of a poet. Baudelaire divided the work of the artist and set it down accordingly in prose of modesty. He did not paint pictures in prose. He did not digress. He did not overburden his pages with technical terms. But the spirit he did breathe in a few swift phrases." 4.

Baudelaire's Christianity

What: Baudelaire was a Christian, born out of his time and a classicalist born out of his time. Baudelaire was not an aesthetic or a political Christian; his tendency toward ritual comes from the instincts of a soul naturally Christian and born when he was he had to discover Christianity



for himself. Charles Du Bos says Baudelaire was a natural Christian and like Flaubert, who said, "I am a mystic at the bottom and I believe in nothing."<sup>1</sup>

Huneker: "His [Baudelaire's] sensibility was both catholic and morbid, though he could be frigid in the face of the most disconcerting misfortunes. He was a man for whom the visible world existed; if Gautier was pagan, Baudelaire was a strayed spirit from medieval days. The spirit ruled and, as Paul Bourget said, 'he saw God.' A Manichean in his worship of evil, he nevertheless abased his soul: 'Oh! Lord God! give me the force and courage to contemplate my heart and body without disgust,' he prays. But as someone remarked of Rouchefoucauld, 'Where you end, Christianity begins.'" <sup>2</sup>.

Evidently Huneker was not too greatly impressed by Baudelaire's piety. Yet he does believe that Baudelaire was sincerely religious:

"How childish yet how touching is his resolution--he wrote in his diary of prayer's dynamic force when he was penniless, in debt, threatened with imprisonment, sick, nauseated with sin: 'To make every morning my prayer to God, the reservoir of all force, and all justice; to my father, to Mariette, and to Poe, as intercessors.'" <sup>3</sup>.

"He [Baudelaire] was a humanist of distinction; he has left a hymn to Saint Francis in the Latin of the decadence." <sup>4</sup>.

#### Baudelaire's Humility

Eliot: "And Baudelaire came to attain the greatest, the most difficult of the Christian virtues, the virtue of humility." <sup>5</sup>.

Huneker: "Recall Baudelaire's prayer: 'Thou, O Lord, my God, grant me the grace to produce some fine lines which will prove to myself that I am not the least of men, that I am not inferior to those I condemn.'" <sup>6</sup>.

Regarding Poems in Prose: "Pity is their keynote, a tenderness for the abject and lowly, a revelation of sensibility that surprised those critics who had discerned in Baudelaire only a sculptor of evil." . . . "But in the tiny landscapes of the Prose Poems there is nothing rigid

1. For Lancelot Andrewes,  
Page 104  
2. Egoists, Page 78  
3. Ibid., Page 77

4. Ibid., Page 95  
5. For Lancelot Andrewes,  
Page 105  
6. Egoists, Page 98



For himself. Charles De los says Handel's was a natural Christian and like Richard, who said, "I am a mystic at the bottom and I believe in nothing."

Handel: "His [Handel's] sensibility was born Catholic and mystic, though he could be rigid in the face of his disconcerting rationalism. He was a man for whom the visible world existed; if Handel was pagan, Handel was a man who lived from medieval days. The spirit ruled and, as Handel said, 'the new God.' A mystic in the working of evil, the mystic's sacred his soul: 'Oh! Lord God! Give me the force and courage to conquer my body and my body without delay.' He says: 'But as a man of Handel's, where you end, Christianity begins.'"

Evidently Handel was not too greatly impressed by Handel's story. Yet he does believe that Handel was sincerely religious:

"How often yet how touching is his reason--the whole in his story of prayer's dynamic force when he was born--less, in fact, concerned with imprisonment, sick, harassed with sin: 'To make every morning my prayer to God, the reservoir of all force, and all justice; to my father, to mother, and to God, as I understand.'"

"[Handel] was a humanist of distinction; he has left a hymn to Saint Francis in the text of the Goodness."

### Handel's humility

Handel: "and Handel came to obtain the greatest, the most difficult of the Christian virtues, the virtue of humility."

Handel: "Handel Handel's prayer: 'Now, O Lord, my God, grant me the grace to produce some fine lines which will prove to myself that I am not the least of men, that I am not inferior to those I consider.'"

Handel: "Handel is their keynote, a man of genius for the subject and lowly, a revelation of humility. It is that inspired those critics who had discovered in Handel only a religion of evil." "But in the tiny language of the prose form there is nothing rigid."



or artificial. Indeed the poet's deliberate attitude of artificiality is dropped. He is human. Not that the deep fundamental note of humanity is ever absent in his poems; the eternal diapason is there even when least overheard." 1

#### Summary of Likenesses and Differences in the Two Essays

From these parallel quotations we see that Huneker and Eliot are largely in accord regarding the characteristics and merits of Baudelaire. Evidently Huneker does not believe that Baudelaire was so naive or so purposeful in regard to his life of sinful sensation as does Eliot, but Huneker is careful to make it plain that much of Baudelaire's devotion to the flowers of evil was due to his charlatanism and much to his desire to try everything. Huneker would be the last man to condemn Baudelaire for these commissions from the standpoint of a narrow, 1890 view of morality as Eliot insists Symons has done.

Huneker believed that Baudelaire was the victim of a heredity which would lead to a condition of hysteria and nerves. I can't believe that he would maintain that all Baudelaire's writing was a result of this condition but that it had its effect I think he could not help but point out. He quotes Baudelaire as writing in 1862: "I have cultivated my hysteria with joy and terror. Today imbecility's wing fanned me as it passed." 2.

Baudelaire also wrote in his journal: "My ancestors, idiots or maniacs . . . all victims of terrible passions." 3. This, Huneker says, was one of Baudelaire's exaggerations but he also says,

"Charles believed himself lost from the time his half-brother was stricken. He also believed that his instability

1. Egoists, Page 99
2. Ibid., Page 77
3. Ibid., Page 92

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of temperament--and he studied his 'case' as would a surgeon--was the result of his parents' disparity in years." <sup>1</sup>

Huneker shows us that there was a morbid strain in Baudelaire of which his disdain for his mother, because she had married again and his hatred of his step-father as a result, were indications, even though he tells us that the mother admitted she did neglect Baudelaire upon her second marriage.

Upon the bigger points that Baudelaire was religious and humble, a writer of lucid words, a classicist, we find Huneker and Eliot in agreement. We see this not only in the quotations cited but from a consideration of the two articles as a whole. They are surprisingly of a spirit, considering the space of time between the authors and their supposedly divergent viewpoints.

#### Additional Points in Huneker's Essay on Baudelaire

Huneker's article, as has been pointed out, is fuller than Eliot's and the parts which have not been quoted are in the same vein--shall we call it 'humanistic'? Huneker deals with the conceded influence of Poe upon Baudelaire and shows that "Poe did not have overwhelming influence upon the formation of Baudelaire's poetic genius," <sup>2</sup> contrary to the usual belief. Huneker says that Baudelaire's prose, particularly Mon Coeur Mis A Nu, was affected, but that the "bulk of poetry in Les Fleurs du Mal was written before Baudelaire read Poe, though they were not published until 1857 in book form." <sup>3</sup> Baudelaire wrote in a letter to Thore: "They accuse even me of imitating Edgar Poe. . . . Do you know why I so patiently translated Poe? Because

1. Egoists, Page 92

2. Ibid., Page 72

3. Ibid., Page 72

of temperament--and he studied his 'case' as would a surgeon--was the result of his parents' disagreeing in years." I remember shows us that there was a world strain in the family of which the strain for the mother, because she had married again, and his hatred of his step-father as a result, were indications, even though he tells us that the mother admitted she did neglect Baudelaire upon her second marriage.

Upon the other points that Baudelaire was religious and humble, a writer of lucid words, a classicist, we find Huxley and Eliot in agreement. We see this not only in the quotations cited but from a consideration of the two articles as a whole. They are surprisingly of a spirit, considering the space of time between the authors and their supposedly divergent viewpoints.

Additional Points in Huxley's Essay on Baudelaire

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he resembled me." <sup>1.</sup>

Huneker points out the contrasts and similarities in Poe and Baudelaire, in their lives and poetry. He also says that Baudelaire's translation of Poe is better than the original. We are informed by Huneker that Baudelaire for a time succumbed to Rousseau's idea of "liberty," became, as Huneker puts it, "a Rousseau reactionary," though for personal reasons and not for <sup>2.</sup> "the eternal principles of Liberty."

Our critic takes exception to some of Henry James's criticism of Baudelaire, particularly for his arraignment of Baudelaire's reprehensible taste and his having introduced Poe as a great man to the French nation. We fancy that these are just <sup>3.</sup> the things to which Eliot would object in James's criticism.

Regarding Baudelaire's critical ability, Huneker says things which show Baudelaire to be a modern and one with leanings toward Humanism, even though Huneker says he was an impressionist: Baudelaire was not only a poet, 'the most original

of the century,' but also a critic of the first rank, one who welcomed Richard Wagner when Paris hooted him and his fellow composer, Hector Berlioz, played the role of the envious; one who fought for Edouard Manet, Leconte de Lisle, Gustave Flaubert, Eugene Delacroix; fought with pen for the modern etchers, illustrators, Meryon, Daumier, Felicien Rops, Gavarni, and Constantin Guys. He literally identified himself with de Quincey and Poe, translating them so wonderfully well that some unpatriotic critics like the French better than the original." . . . . "A 'icy ecstasy' is profound and harmonic, whose criticism is penetrated by a catholic quality, who anticipated modern critics in his abhorrence of schools and environments, preferring to isolate the man and study him uniquely." <sup>4.</sup>

"The polemics of historical schools were a cross for him to

1. Egoists, Page 89

2. Ibid., Page 76

3. Ibid., Page 80

4. Ibid., Page 81



of the century, but also a critic of the first rank, one who welcomed Richard Wagner when Paris hosted him and his fellow composer, Hector Berlioz, played the role of the en- vious; one who fought for Adolphe Menier, Comte de Paris, Gustave Flaubert, Eugene Delacroix; fought with her for the modern authors, Flaubert, Guy de Maupassant, Zola, Taine, Renan, Gide, Gautier, and Comte de Paris. He is usually identi- fied himself with de Maupassant and Zola, translating them so wonderfully well that some important critics like the French writer that the original. . . . "A few decades" is profound and harmonic, whose criticism is penetrated by a certain quality, who anticipated modern critics in his apprehension of schools and environments, referring to isolate the can and study him uniquely. A.

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bear, and he bore all his learning lightly. Like a true critic he judged by form than theme. There are no types; there is only life, he had cried before Jules LaForgue. He was ever art-for-art, yet, having breadth of comprehension and a Heine-like capacity for seeing both sides of his own nature and its idiosyncrasies, he could write: 'The puerile Utopia of the school of art for art, in excluding morality, and often even passion, was necessarily sterile. All literature which refuses to advance fraternally between science and philosophy is a homicidal and a suicidal literature.'" 1.

"Baudelaire, then, was no less sound a critic of the plastic arts than of music and literature. Like his friend Flaubert, he had a horror of democracy, of the democratisation of the arts, of all the sentimental fuss and fuddle of a pseudo-humanitarianism." 2.

Huneker says that Baudelaire's influence in the main has been baneful to impressionable artists in embryo in producing much artificial and morbid writing. "In his criticism alone was he the sane, logical Frenchman." 3.

These latter portions of the essay, the phases of Baudelaire not treated by T. S. Eliot in For Lancelot Andrewes, have been cited not only for their pertinence to the discussion of Baudelaire but because they give us interesting sidelights on Huneker's viewpoint on criticism. Almost all the statements concerning Baudelaire's critical ability would apply to Huneker as we shall see in the next chapter.

1. Egoists, Page 81
2. Ibid., Page 85
3. Ibid., Page 87

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### Humanistic and Anti-humanistic Ideas in Huneker's Work

So far, we have considered two critiques of Huneker as examples of the humanistic attitude in criticism and another for the purpose of comparison of it with a critique by a present-day Humanist. Now let us examine Huneker's work as a whole for examples of humanistic ideas or principles. We must bear in mind that in Huneker's day there was no talk of Humanism as a current literary idea. There was the old Humanism of the Renaissance, from which the new derives, and there was always the classical influence. There were Humanists of distinction then, standing for what are the fundamental principles of the movement today but there was no conscious labeling of certain ideas or considerations as humanistic.

The "technical terms" of the movement, if they could be so-called, are largely the outcome of the philosophical studies of Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, and the modern Humanists. In our application of them to the writings of Huneker we must be conscious that the term and its application may not always coincide throughout. The comparison will be a matter of idea, rather than of geometrical exactitude.

We shall list some of the stock ideas of the present-day Humanism and under them place what we find in Huneker's work to bear them out or to contradict them.

To get the other side of the picture we shall examine Huneker's essays for traces of Romanticism as examples of anti-humanistic ideas and show wherein Huneker was or was not

Humanistic and Anti-humanistic Ideas in Hume's Work

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Romantic.

The humanistic and the Romantic data so gained will be examined toward the determining of Huneker's critical qualities.

### Humanistic Ideas

#### Interest in the Classics

In his vast scholarship Huneker naturally included the classics. They were standards of excellence to him as the following excerpt shows:

"All Christianity is in the Imitation of Christ, and the quintessence of secular wisdom may be found in Montaigne. No better gymnastic for the spirit is there than Plato, and woe to him that reads not the Bible--not alone for the style or the 'quotations' but for the sake of his miserable soul. The classics, Greek and Latin, are what Bach and Beethoven are to musicians." 1.

Still, Huneker did not believe that the classics were dead and fixed forms to which the literature of the present or of the future should conform. He was fond of quoting Stendhal regarding the classics:

"Henry Beyle-Stendhal wrote in his witty, malicious manner that 'Romanticism is the art of presenting to the people literary works which in the actual state of their habits and beliefs are capable of giving the greatest possible pleasure; Classicism, on the contrary, is the art of presenting literature which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their great-grandfathers.' But Poe and Chopin remain invincibly Romantic, yet are Classics." 2.

Undoubtedly there were Greeks who complained that Euripides did not conform to the standard requirements for thought and action in the drama; yet today Euripides is classic. Many a classic, as Huneker maintains, is a dead romantic. Many of our romantic corpses may be some day embalmed in classic mausoleums.

1. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 128
2. Bedouins, Page 128



Romantic.

The humanistic and the Romantic days so gained will be ex-  
amined toward the determining of Hume's critical position.

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No better gymnastic for the spirit is there than Plato, and  
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style or the 'propositions' but for the sake of his character  
soul. The classics, Greek and Latin, are what Bacon and  
Beethoven are to moderns." I.

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romantic corpses may be some day embalmed in classic museums.



### Seeing Life Sanely and Seeing It Whole

If anything human was interesting to Huneker, he was not deceived by the aberrational bias of any one human being. It is a point for commendation with him when an author sees life steadily and sees it whole.

"As to the Puritanism of our present novels one may dare to say in the teeth of youthful protestants that it is non-existent. The pendulum has swung too far the other way." 1

"So, merely as a suggestion to ambitious youngsters, let the novelist of the future in search of a novelty describe a happy marriage, children, a husband who doesn't drink or gamble, a wife who votes, yet loves her home, her family, and knows how to cook. What a realistic bombshell he would hurl into the camp of sentimental socialists and them that believe a wedding certificate is like Balzac's La Peau de Chagrin--a document daily shrinking in happiness." 2.

"Paul Verlaine has told us that 'j'ai vécu énormément,' though his living enormously did not prove that he was happy. Far from it. But he had at least the courage to relate his terrors. American novelists may agree with Dostoevsky that 'everything in the world always ends in meanness'; or with Doctor Pangloss that all is for the best in the best of possible worlds. An affair of temperament.. But don't mix the values. Don't confuse intellectual substances. Don't smear a fact with treacle and call it truth." 3.

"For them Mr. Howells is a superannuated writer. Would there were more like him in continence of speech, wholesomeness of judgment, nobility of ideals, and in the shrewd perception of character." 4.

Huneker is here speaking of the ordinary fiction writers of that day.

"Let us pray that during the ensuing year no rust shall colour our soul into a dingy red. Let us pray for the living that they may be loosed from their politics and see life steadily and whole." 5.

The gift of a proportional viewpoint was Huneker's. He

1. Unicorns, Page 86

2. Ibid., Page 87

3. Ibid., Page 88

4. Ibid., Page 91

5. Ibid., Page 357







saw both sides of a question:

"No, I simply hit the eternal triangle johnnies a wallop. Adultery has been done to death. It's worse than uplift. I don't change my spots over night. In the concrete adultery is the same old teasing device, pruritus and forever. But the bores who write such stupid English always are moral; always pleasant." 1

Here Huneker is writing to H. L. Mencken on July 18, 1916.

With all his interest in exceptional individualities, he could write:

"Supermen, superrogues, sentimental humbugs, are done to the death, yet not a word of praise is given the garden variety of the human plant. Like the 'average sensual man' and 'the man in the street' he is taken for granted. Mediocrity is the backbone of our country. The man in the street whose collective opinion, whose vote rules, whose fighting spirit protects us, isn't this chap, this 'fellow and his wife,' worth studying? A majority of 'exalted' souls would transform America into a howling wilderness. The word 'mediocrity' has become debased in meaning. It formerly stood for the happy equilibrium of our mental and physical forces. The golden mediocrity of the Latin poet. To its possessor it spelled content, and, as long as the wolf was kept from the door, contentment reigned. That is the precise word--contentment not happiness, which is too ecstatic to last without burning up nerve-tissue or without insanity supervening. To be contented was once a gift of the gods; nowadays it means that you are commonplace, without social ambitions. And this is not well.

"Notwithstanding that we are a nation of one hundred million humans (mostly busybodies and politicians, as Carlyle would say) we are each in his own fashion endeavouring to escape the imputation of mediocrity. In vain. Number is mediocrity. We think to order, we vote as we are bidden, and wear the clothes we are ordered to wear by destroyers of taste. Why then this mad desire to be exceptional, whence this cowardice that shudders before genuine art, and espouses the mediocre because it is more soothing to fat nerves? Let us hear the truth. It is because, happily for us, mediocrity is the normal condition of mankind, and genius is not." 2

Huneker admired decorum, discrimination, the "inner check."

1. Letters, Page 218
2. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 8







"We prefer the austerer Ibsen, who presents his men and women within the frame of the drama, absolutely without personal comment or parti pris--as before his decadence did Tolstoy in his novels. Ibsen is the type of the philosophical anarchist, the believer in man's individuality in the state for the individual, not the individual for the state. It is at least more dignified than the other's flood of confessions, of hysterical self-accusations, of penitential vows and abundant lack of restraint." 1.

### Anti-humanitarianism

Huneker had a true Humanist's dislike for humanitarianism:

"I loathe sloppy humanitarianism and prefer an army of Nietzsches to a slobbering altruist." 2.

In an article, The Lesson of the Master, which concerns the letters of Henry James, Huneker says:

"The veiled hypocrisy that permits us to swallow the vulgar enormities of Zola because of his humbug 'humanitarianism,' draws a taut line about the finished art of Bourget, who even if he is frank is always the moralist, not a preacher but a moralist whose morals are implicit." 3.

The direct evidences of Huneker's antipathy to humanitarianism could be multiplied many times as they are quite common throughout his work.

### Hostility to the Reforming Tendency

Huneker was distinctly not a reformer nor did he have any use for the tribe.

"Let us pray that we may not take it on ourselves to feel holier than our neighbors. Let us pray that we be not cursed with the itching desire to reform our fellows, for the way of the reformer is hard, and he always gets what he deserves: the contempt of his fellow men. He is usually a hypocrite." 4.

"All fanatics are alike. The truth is seldom their aim. They become propagandists no matter the silliness, inutility, or the positive evil of their cause." 5.

1. Ivory, Apes and Peacocks  
Page 81
2. Letters, Page 225
3. Bookman, May 1920, Volume  
51, Page 364

4. Unicorns, Page 357
5. Steeplejack, Volume 1,  
page 27



"He prefer the master Isaac, who presents his men and women within the frame of the drama, absolutely without personal comment or partial criticism before his decision. His policy in his novels, Isaac is the type of the psychological narrator, the believer in man's individuality in the state for the individual, not the individual for the state. It is at least more dignified than the other's flood of confessions, of hysterical self-accusations, of sentimental vows and abundant lack of restraint."

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In an article, The Lesson of the Master, which concerns

the letters of Henry James, Husserl says:

"The valued hypocrisy that permits me to swallow the vulgar materialism of this because of his humanism, humanitarianism, draws a line about the finished art of humanism, who even if he is frank is always the materialist, not a precursor but a materialist whose words are materialist."

The direct evidence of Husserl's antipathy to humanitarianism could be multiplied many times as they are quite common

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## Hostility to the Reforming Tendency

Husserl was distinctly not a reformer, nor did he have any

use for the tribe.

"Let us pray that we may not take it on ourselves to feel no longer that our neighbor is a prey that we are not covered with the itching desire to reform our fellow, for the way of the reformer is hard, and he always gets what he deserves: the contempt of his fellow men. He is usually a hypocrite." 3.

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1. Ivory, Ages and Perceptions 81
2. Letters, Page 222
3. Husserl, May 1920, Volume 51, Page 284
4. Unpublished, Page 207
5. Steinfach, Volume 1, Page 272



Here Huneker is speaking of the fact that one of his grandfathers was a temperance advocate, a reformer. Again,

"But the busy little lawyers, the grave and learned judges, the pestiferous politicians with their incessant clamourings, their raising of false, stupid, dangerous issues--where are they all? Not a book, not a picture, not a melody did they bequeath to us, and so they are irretrievably dead. (This is extremely hard on those humbugs, the reformers.)" 1.

### Lack of Acquisitive Instinct

Huneker's life, with its constant lack of money, is a long testimony to that inability to hoard money which he often laments in his pages. Toward the end of his life we find him writing that he is going out for all the money in sight but one questions his ability to stick to the resolve or profit by it if it should become a reality. 2.

"But in 1875 it was different. I heard the call of music and obeyed it, and have regretted doing so ever since--that is, when I look at my bankbook." 3.

"I didn't get salary till 1888. As my father often remarked, my specialty was working for other people at reduced rates." 4.

"Further to muddle my affairs was a disinclination to make money. My father often declared that if I saw a ten-dollar bill coming to greet me I would run away. I have changed since then. I like money. Who doesn't? I spend it, believing that it's bad luck to save. But to pass our interval between two eternities raking in gold is simply absurd to me. I have always worked for leisure to waste time. I know of some families, not bohemian in their habits, who are never more than a few dollars ahead during their lifetime. I am in that class, living from day to day in the industry of my pen. It seems ridiculous, and it is perilous. . . . It is time, not money, that is the true treasure of life." 5.

### Anti-philistinism

Nobody could be less the philistine than Huneker:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Steeplejack, Vol. 1, Page 135                          | 3. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 154 |
| 2. Letters in American Mercury Jan. 1924, Vol 1., Page 22 | 4. Ibid., Volume 2, Page 18        |
|   | 5. Ibid., Volume 1, Page 202       |







"I am not a sport. In my veins flows sporting blood, but only in the Darwinian sense am I a 'sport,' a deviation from the normal history of my family, which has always been devoted to athletic pleasures. A baseball match in which carnage ensues is a mild diversion for me. I can't understand the fury of the contest. I yawn, though the frenzied enthusiasm of the spectators interests me. I have fallen asleep over a cricket match at Lord's in London, and the biggest bore of all was a Sunday afternoon bull-fight in Madrid. It was such a waste of potential beefsteaks. Prize-fights disgust, shell races are puerile, football matches smack of obituaries. As for golf--that is a prelude to senility, or the antechamber to an undertaker's establishment." 1.

"Oh! America! Happy hunting-ground for humbug, hysteria, and hypocrisy." 2.

"Consider the new-rich. What a study they afford the students of manners. A new generation has arisen. Its taste, intelligence, and culture; its canned manners, canned music--preferably pseudo-African--canned art, canned food, canned literature; its devotion to the mediocre--what a field for our aspiring young 'secretaries to society.'" 3.

"Talk about the 'dignity of labour' to workingmen and watch their incredulous sneers. Dignity be hanged! they used to say to me at the dinner-hour; it's the grinding misery of long hours--ten hours in those times--the poor pay and the risks of the job, and after my short experience I heartily agree with their views, and I'm neither a socialist nor an anarchist much less a sentimental agitator, parlour rebel, nor amateur busybody fomenting trouble among the proletariat--to whom the world will presently belong, the bourgeois having had his fling since Napoleon I." 4.

Of George Moore's saying that Americans' writing was more interesting than Englishmen's, not so stodgy:

"Mr. Moore doesn't know that over here we smoke the opium of optimism." 5.

"We pretend that we are not mediocre--Ah! Bovarysme incapable--yet we proudly point to our national prosperity." 6.

### Antipathy to Dogma

Huneker was surely not concerned with dogmas or creeds.

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Unicorns, Page 340         | 4. Steeplejack, Vol. 1, P. 109 |
| 2. Steeplejack, Vol. 1, P. 98 | 5. Ibid., Volume 2, Page 231   |
| 3. Unicorns, Page 90          | 6. Ibid., Volume 1, Page 9     |







His very eclecticism is an evidence of no formal adherence to a system of thoughts and ideas. He found the true, the good, and the beautiful in many philosophies and many religions. Outright and by implication, he tells us many times the truth contained in the following quotation from his letters:

"I loathe movements--artistic, political, literary, religious--all propaganda." 1.

In a letter to Mme. Emily Barili, dated March 23, 1919,

Huneker says:

". . . also glad to hear . . . that Alfredo is still an idealist in art. Bully! It doesn't pay, dear friend, but the spiritual satisfaction is better than dollars and cents." 2.

There are many other indications in Huneker, as examples already quoted will attest, that he had idealism, delicacy, elevation, and distinction. He also possessed the Christian virtues of awe, reverence, and humility.

### Humility

And the greatest of these in Huneker's make-up was humility. A consideration of Huneker's work fills us with admiration or despair at the lowliness of his self-esteem over his unusual attainments.

Mr. Robert Cortes Holliday in Our Steeplejack of the Seven Arts in his Turns About Town tells us the following two stories. At the time of the first, Mr. Holliday was a clerk in the retail department of Scribner's, Huneker's publishers. The famous critic, W. C. Brownell, was an editorial adviser for Scribner's for many years.

1. Letters, Page 209
2. Ibid., Page 274

his very collection is an evidence of no formal adherence to a system of thought and ideas. He found the true, the good, and the beautiful in many philosophies and many religions. Throughout his life, he calls us many times the truth contained in the following quotation from his letters:

"I found movements--artistic, political, literary, religious--all propaganda." 1.

In a letter to Mrs. Emily Smith, dated March 23, 1914,

Emerson says:

"... also glad to hear... that Alfred is still an idealist in art. Truly, it doesn't pay, dear friend, but the spiritual satisfaction is better than dollars and cents." 2.

There are many other indications in Emerson, as examples already quoted will attest, that he had idealism, religious, elevation, and distinction. He also possessed the Christian virtues of love, reverence, and humility.

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And the greatest of these in Emerson's make-up was humility. A consideration of Emerson's work tells us with admiration of his selflessness of his self-esteem over his unusual attainments.

Mr. Herbert Carter Holaday in Our Spiritualism of the Seven Arts in his Times about 1890 tells us the following two stories. At the time of the first, Mr. Holaday was a clerk in the retail department of Scribner's, Emerson's publisher. The famous critic, W. D. Howells, was an editorial adviser for Scribner's for many years.



"He [Huneker] was, I distinctly remember, held decidedly in regard by the retail staff because he was (what, by a long shot, a good many 'authors' were not) exceedingly affable in manner to us clerks.

"The moment I have particularly in mind was when Samuel Butler's The Way of All Flesh first appeared in an American edition. We all know all about Butler now. But, looking back, it certainly is astonishing how innocent most all of us then were of any knowledge of the great author of Erewhon. Even so searching a student as W. C. Brownell was practically unacquainted with Butler. He was taking home a copy of The Way of All Flesh to read. Mr. Huneker was standing by. In some comment on the book he remarked that Butler had been a painter. 'A painter!' exclaimed Mr. Brownell, in a manner as though wondering how it came about he knew so little of the man. 'But this,' said Mr. Huneker, referring to the novel, 'is not his best stuff. That is in his note-books.' Brownell: 'And where are they?' Huneker: 'In the British Museum.' Mr. Brownell made a fluttering gesture (as though to express that he 'gave up') toward Mr. Huneker. 'He knows everything!' he ejaculated." 1.

Mr. Holliday also tells us that when New Cosmopolis was published, at a time when Huneker's fame was already secure, Joyce Kilmer reviewed it very enthusiastically in the New York Times. Huneker went to the trouble of hunting up Kilmer to  
2.  
thank him very simply for his appreciation.

In a letter of December 30, 1917 to Theodore Presser, Huneker begs off from being the guest of honor at a dinner. He wants no such acclaim or fuss:

"I'm immensely flattered and pleased by the idea of a dinner, but I can't conscientiously accept, because I never go to dinners public or semi-public. I never make speeches, because I can't (though I can, when pressed, converse fluently with a barman); and so, Theodore, let the projected function--too much honor, by the way, for a poor music-reporter--modulate into a quiet luncheon, a partie carré consisting of Mrs. Presser, Mr. Presser, Mr. Cooke and

Yours as ever

Jim Huneker" 3.

1. Turns About Town by Robert Cortes Holliday, Page 185
2. Ibid., Page 189
3. Letters, Page 238



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tention in manner to his clients.

"The moment I have particularly in mind was when Samuel Butler's The Way of All Flesh first appeared in an American edition. We all know what Butler now. But, looking back, it certainly is astonishing how innocent most of us then were of any knowledge of the great author of Utopia. Even as appearing a student as W. C. Brownell was practically unacquainted with Butler. He was taking home a copy of The Way of All Flesh to read. Mr. Hunter was standing by. In some comment on the book he remarked that Butler had been a painter. 'A painter!' exclaimed Mr. Brownell, in a manner as though wondering how it came about he knew so little of the man. 'But this,' said Mr. Hunter, 'is not his best work. There is in his nose-book.' Brownell: 'And where are they?' Hunter: 'In the artist's hands.' Mr. Brownell made a listless gesture (as though to express that he 'gave up') toward Mr. Hunter. 'He knows everything,' he ejaculated. 'I.

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Yours as ever

Jim Hunter"

1. Form above from by Robert Gortas Holiday, Page 185

2. Ibid., Page 186

3. Letters, Page 238



In a letter to H. L. Mencken, dated August 1, 1916, Hune-  
ker is telling why he limited his consideration of Conrad in  
Ivory Apes and Peacocks to two phases and says:

"You are right, that 'Ivory' &c. essay is solemn and pe-  
destrian and slurous." 1.

Regarding Mencken's article on him in Prefaces, he writes,  
on October 18, 1917,

"As for the James Huneker it is despairingly exaggerated--  
why, warum, pourquoi, perché? A newspaper man in a hell  
of a hurry writing journalese is not to be dumped into the  
seats of the mighty so easily." 2.

The following is found in a letter to E. E. Ziegler of  
February 17, 1905:

"Rather than have you change your style--if such a thing  
were possible--I would lose your friendship. As it is  
your copy this week is to chortle over. Ripping good!  
Don't write with grave pauses, profound smirks and all the  
pompous, silly, amatory mean little reservations, attenu-  
ations, periphrases and involutions of your contemporaries.  
Far better an honest staccato phrase than a wilderness of  
sostenutos. And now I have done trying to play the school-  
master--a sad role for me to essay. I hope you are not of-  
fended." 3.

At the end of Steeplejack he says:

"And now it is time to ring down the final curtain on the  
show. I might go on tapping new levels of energy, to use  
the striking phrase of William James, but to what purpose!  
Life is like an onion. You may peel off layer after layer  
until you reach the core--and then there is nothing. So  
could I skin my little symphony, in which there has been  
more dissonance than harmony, and enumerate my leading-  
motives; my mediocrity; my resigned attitude as a contem-  
porary; my steeplejackism--I am still an impenitent steeple-  
jack and hope to die with my boots on; my disgust with  
Barmecide banquets; my vanity, selfishness, and egotism;  
my mannerisms, limitations; my many sins of omission and  
commission, including my regrets for girls unkissed, my  
garrulity, discursiveness, and vice of allusiveness; the  
list might be made much longer, only you must be weary of

1. Letters, Page 219
2. Ibid., Page 232
3. Ibid., Page 34



In a letter to E. E. Wencker, dated August 1, 1915, Hume-  
 was is telling why he liked his consideration of conduct in  
 Ivory ages and Facebook to two phases and says:

"You are right, that 'Ivory' is, really, a solemn and be-  
 gentian and almost."

Regarding Wencker's article on him in Facebook, he writes,

on October 15, 1915,

"As for the James Hume-  
 why, when, perhaps, a newspaper man in a hell  
 of a hardy writing, Hume-  
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 Don't write with grave faces. I hope and all the  
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 Far better an honest attitude than a wilderness of  
 solitudes. and now I have done trying to play the school-  
 master--a role for me to essay. I hope you are not of-  
 fended."

At the end of Facebook he says:

"And now it is time to ring down the final curtain on the  
 show. I might go on depicting new levels of energy, to use  
 the striking phrase of William James, but to what purpose?  
 This is like an onion. You may peel off layer after layer  
 until you reach the core--and when there is nothing. So  
 could I skin my little cynicism, in which there has been  
 more dissonance than harmony, and enumerate my leading-  
 motives; my mediocrity; my resigned attitude as a conser-  
 vative; my skepticism--I am still an independent spirit.  
 Jack and hope to die with my boots on; my disgust with  
 barbed wire fences; my vanity, selfishness, and egoism;  
 my mannerisms, limitations; my many sins of omission and  
 commission, including my respect for girls unhoused, my  
 generosity, disinterestedness, and vice of selfishness; the  
 list might be made much longer, only you must be weary of



the personal pronoun stitched in the palimpsest of my adventure. The truth is seldom amusing, and my velleities too often graze the fantastic." 1.

Sometimes the humility is almost self-abasement:

"It is not, my dear Mr. Brownell, that I wish our estimates to accord--that would indeed be presumptuous on my part. . . I hope I don't bother you with this chatter. You are one of the elect, mon cher maître. I owe much to you." 2.

Perhaps the following better illustrates the innate modesty of Huneker than anything else. He is speaking regarding the phase of his work on which all authorities are agreed, his introduction of new men, the extension of the art horizon of America.

"I have no grievances. I am what I made myself, therefore, I blame myself for my shortcomings. As I loathe the brand of any particular school or movement in art, so I detest the fellow who lays the blame of his troubles on some one else--usually his wife. Friends have praised me, but I don't deserve that praise. I never aimed at anything and if I anticipated others in 'discovering'--presumptuous word--certain of the new men in Europe and America, it was because of my critical curiosity; also because a newspaper man has a scent for news." 3.

Again, regarding his autobiography, Steeplejack, in a letter to Alden March, May 28, 1918, he says:

"I have preferred to give the series a strong autobiographical coloring at the beginning; thereafter men and events will rule, connected by a slender thread of autobiography. The personal pronoun is personally abhorrent to me, but it is inescapable." 4.

In another letter, dated July 28, 1918, to Mme. Frida Ashforth we find the following:

"It [Steeplejack] has to be garrulous and egotistic else it wouldn't be autobiographical." 5.

Such depreciation of self, if extended, can become a vice.

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|---|----------------------|
| 1. Steeplejack, Vol. 2, P. 306                      | 4. Letters, Page 253 |
| 2. Scribner's Magazine, May 1922, Vol. 72, Page 306 | 5. Ibid., Page 261   |
| 1. Steeplejack, Vol. 2, P. 204                      |                      |



the personal pronoun switched in the paragraph of my 20-  
venture. The error is rather serious, and my verities  
too often grace the literature."

Sometimes the humility is almost self-abasement:  
"It is not, my dear Mr. Snowball, that I wish our estimates  
to accord--they would indeed be presumptuous on my part. . .  
I hope I don't bother you with this chapter. You are  
one of the few, who after all, I owe much to you."

Perhaps the following better illustrates the innate modesty  
of Whitman than anything else. He is speaking regarding the  
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The personal pronoun is personally abundant to me, but it  
is inescapable."

In another letter, dated July 28, 1918, to Mrs. F. W. Ham-  
forth we find the following:

"It [Steadfast] has to be generous and egotistic else it  
wouldn't be autobiographical."  
Such representation of self, if extended, can become a vice.

- |                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Steadfast, Vol. 2, p. 208 | 4. Letter, page 232 |
| 2. Steadfast's Magazine, May | 5. Ibid., page 231  |
| 1922, Vol. 18, page 208      |                     |
| 3. Steadfast, Vol. 2, p. 204 |                     |



Huneker's attitude toward Henry Cabot Lodge, as shown in his letters to Mr. Lodge and in the article on Theodore Roosevelt in Steeplejack, smacks slightly of servility, at least to one who believes him the superior of both, on most points.

### Absence of "The Demon of the Absolute"

In the light of Huneker's protestations of his adherence to no particular school, of his catholicity of view-point, and of his great eclecticism in regard to artistic principles, we should not expect him to be dominated by any one theory or idea. One of his critical virtues is that he never has an axe to grind.

"Now, I realize that while life is too vast to be compressed into any single formula, whether religious, philosophical, or artistic, universal wisdom has been distilled into certain books." 1.

"The idea of a great American novel is an 'absolute,' and nature abhors an absolute, despite the belief of some metaphysicians to the contrary." 2.

Huneker would have held that his possession of what he called "general ideas" would have acted against his arriving at an unbiased estimate of an author; that he would have constantly been seeking to find in the work of art a justification of his beliefs or a contradiction of them. It did not prevent his having standards but it did prevent his holding up as the touchstone of merit or inferiority an inflexible structure of his own personal beliefs.

"Catholicity in taste and judgment has been my aim, sometimes my undoing. The half is better than the whole, but for me the too much is too little. Again a case of personal temperament." 3.

1. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 128
2. Unicorns, Page 82
3. Steeplejack, Volume 2, Page 212

...attitude toward Henry Cabot Lodge, as shown in his letters to Mr. Lodge and in the article on Theodore Roosevelt in Steepjack, makes slight of servility, at least to one who believes in the superiority of both, on most points.

Assessment of "The Reason of the Assailant"

In the light of Wheeler's protestations of his adherence to no particular school, of his catholicity of view-point, and of his great eclecticism in regard to artistic principles, we should not expect him to be dominated by any one theory or idea. One of his critical virtues is that he never has an axe to grind.

"Now, I realize that while life is too vast to be compressed into any single formula, whether religious, philosophical, or artistic, universal wisdom has been distilled into certain books." 1.

"The idea of a great American novel is an 'absolutism'; and nature abhors an absolute, despite the belief of some metaphysicians to the contrary." 2.

Wheeler would have held that his possession of what he called "general ideas" would have acted against his arriving at an unbiased estimate of an author; that he would have conscientiously been seeking to find in the work of art a justification of his beliefs or a contradiction of them. It did not prevent his having standards but it did prevent his holding up as the touchstone of merit or demerit an inflexible structure of his own personal beliefs.

"Catholicity in taste and judgment has been my aim, sometimes my undoing. The half is better than the whole, but for me the too much is too little. Again a case of person-  
al temperament." 3.



## Dualism

Where has the dualism which lies at the heart of all human things been better stated than in the opening pages of Unicorns?

"Eternal is the conflict of the Real and the Ideal; Aristotle and Plato; Alice and the Unicorn; the practical and the poetic; butterflies and geese; and rare roast-beef versus the impossible blue rose. And neither the Lion nor the Unicorn has yet fought the battle decisive. Perhaps the day may come when, weariness invading their very bones, they may realise that they are as different sides of the same coveted shield; matter and spirit, the multitude and the individual. Then unlock the ivory tower, abolish the tyrannies of superannuated superstitions, and give the people vision, without which they perish. The divine rights of humanity, no longer of kingly cabbages.

"The dusk of the future is washed with the silver of hope. The Lion and the Unicorn in single yoke. Strength and Beauty should represent the fusion of the Ideal and the Real. There should be no anarchy, no socialism, no Brotherhood or Sisterhood of mankind, just the millennium of sense and sentiment." 1.

Here Huneker is upholding the belief of those who make the most telling criticism of Humanism. Such people believe that, far from saying the dualism can never be altered, we should strive to fuse the two toward the greater glory of mankind. The cleavage exists but the problem is to weld the two to produce the completely integrated man.

## Religion

Huneker is more a T. S. Eliot than an Irving Babbitt as far as religion is concerned. It was an aesthetic as well as a fundamental impulse with him. It was real religion which took his attention, not the inane and insane posturings and the hypocrisy which often pass for such.







"Let us pray that we are not struck by religious zeal; religious people are not always good people; good people are not envious, jealous, penurious, censorious, or busybodies, or too much bound up in the prospect of the mote in their brother's eye and unmindful of the beam in their own. Furthermore, good people do not unveil with uncharitable joy the faults of women. Have faith. Have hope, and remember that charity is as great as chastity.

"Let us pray for the misguided folk who, forgetful of Mother Church, her wisdom, her consolations, flock to the tents of lewd, itinerant, mumbo-jumbo howlers, that blaspheme the sacred name as they epileptically leap, shouting glory-kingdom come and please settle at the captain's office.

"Though they run on all fours and bark as hyenas, they shall not enter the city of the saints, being money-changers in the Temple, and tripe-sellers of souls. Better Tophet and its burning pitch than a wilderness of such apes of God. Some men and women of culture and social position indorse these sorry buffoons, the apology for their paradoxical conduct being any port in a storm; any degrading circus, so it be followed by a mock salvation. But salvation for whom? What deity cares for such foaming at the mouth? such fustian? Conversion is silent and comes from within, and not to the din of brass-bands and screaming hallelujahs. It takes all sorts of gods to make the cosmos, but why return to the antics and fetishes of our primate ancestors, the cave-dwellers? This squirming and panting and brief reform 'true religion'? On the contrary it is a throwback to bestiality, to the vilest instincts. A 'soul' that has to be saved by such means is a soul not worth the saving. To the discard with it, where, flaming in purgatorial fires, it may be refashioned for future re-incarnation on some other planet." 1.

"Now, I am what an old and very dear priest calls a 'hickory Catholic,' yet I love the odour of incense, the mystic bells, the music, the atmosphere of the altar, above all the intellectual life of the church. There is a world of thought suspended like Mahomet's coffin above the quotidian existence of religion. It is not free to everyone, nor is it an arcanum forbidden all but the few." 2.

"Religion has given an emotional coloring to my modes of thought. It has been called a crutch for lame minds by Huxley; it is really a spiritual anodyne. Mankind demands some superstition--to give it a Voltaire name. 'Ecrasez l'infame!' he wrote, forgetting that belief in the impossible is an organic necessity, and not sacerdotal dupery. Without vision people perish." 3.

1. Unicorns, Page 357
2. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 55
3. Ibid., Bolume 1, Page 192







"Religion and government were not invented by priests and kings to enslave us. Our organic needs evolved them." 1.

It was more a question of religious impulse, reverent feeling with Huneker than a matter of denominational orthodoxy:

"I, who am not of what is euphemistically called the religious temperament, cannot pass a church without saluting and often entering. Two rituals fascinate me. The Roman Catholic and the Hebrew. . . . The soul of man is older than his handiwork, and his soul has always aspired after the vision. Totem and fetish, tabu, magic, animism, and idols are incorporated in the solemn church services of today. Religious emotion is as old as humanity. Baudelaire would not permit his friends to mock his grotesque wooden idol, because, as he whispered, a god might be concealed in it. The idea of divinity lurking everywhere was one of the charms of the pagan world. Man was accomplice in the eternal mysteries. Religion, that most ancient and jealous thing, was a forest peopled by gods, pluralistic deities. Some men outlive this feeling. I cannot. And the aesthetic symbolism of the Mass is alluring. But suppose that it would have been possible to have consulted me at the age of understanding. Would I have subscribed to the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church? Or, to take a commoner example, was I asked whether I preferred being a Democrat or Republican?" 2.

Was Huneker a Humanist in his feeling about religion? What is the humanistic position on religion? Norman Foerster does not give religion much place in the humanistic scheme of things; T. S. Eliot says it is a necessity and that the humanistic position is insecure without the inevitable corollary of religion. Professor Babbitt certainly did not exclude religion. He maintained that we knew nothing concerning the nature of "the higher will" and that it might or might not be a working of the divine in the minds of men. At any rate, Humanism and religious feeling are not incompatible. Huneker realized the existence in the world of "man" and of "more-than-man," the dualism of "bread"

1. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 319

2. Ibid., Volume 1, Page 34







and of "not-by-bread-alone." This in itself, is good humanistic doctrine.

### Freedom of the Will

Huneker's position with respect to the humanistic postulate of the freedom of the will is not so clear. Sometimes he seems to believe that the development of materialistic psychology has precluded the possibility of the freedom of the will:

"We live, as a modern thinker puts it, because we stand like the rest of cognisable nature under the universal law of causality; this idea is founded not on a metaphysical but a biological basis. Metaphysics is a pleasing diversion, though it doesn't get us to finalities. Happiness is an absolute. Therefore it has no existence. There never was, there never will be an earthly paradise, no matter what the socialists say. Content is the summum bonum of mankind; the content that comes with sound health and a clear conscience. The wrangling over Free Will is now considered a sign of ghost-worship." 1.

And again,

"The constancy of the human intellect proclaimed by Remy de Gourmont may be one more metaphysical illusion. Historical perspective is too limited to permit any but vague generalizations. As for fatalism, what else are those who write and speak of Free-Will, Immanence of the Deity, but fatalists? If the exterior world is a mirage, of our innerself, then the lack of continuity, the fragmentary attempts, the disjointed thinking without sequence or import, are not all these things natural for the reason that they are?" 2.

In spite of all this, we should believe in the freedom of the will for the courage it will give us.

"Nothing endures but mobility, changeless change. Nevertheless, we speak of stability, permanence, immortality, the absolute when nature abhors an absolute. The Eternal Return is now. It is the eternal recommencement. . . . But we must believe, the very affirmation of belief--say--in free-will--puts courage into actions." 3.

There is hope for the doctrine of the freedom of the will

1. Unicorns, Page 157  
2. Steeplejack, Volume 1,  
Page 316

3. Ibid., Volume 1, Page 315



and of "not-by-bread-alone." This in itself, is good humanitarian doctrine.

### Freedom of the Will

Hansen's position with respect to the humanitarian postulate of the freedom of the will is not so clear. Sometimes he seems to believe that the development of materialistic psychology has precluded the possibility of the freedom of the will:

"We live, as a modern thinker puts it, because we stand like the rest of cognizable nature under the universal law of causality; this idea is founded not on a metaphysical but a biological basis. Metaphysics is a pleasing diversion, though it doesn't give us so much as the sciences. Science, therefore, it has no existence. There never was, there never will be an earthly paradise, no matter what the socialists say. Content is the human domain of mankind; the content that comes with sound health and a clear conscience. The wrangling over free will is now considered a sign of ghost-worship." 1.

and again,

"The constancy of the human intellect proclaimed by Kant as Government may be one more metaphysical illusion. Historical perspective is too limited to permit any but vague generalizations. As for fatalism, what else are those who write and speak of free-will, Immanence of the deity, but fatalists? Is the exterior world a mirror, of our inner self, then the lack of continuity, the fragmentary attempts, the disjointed talking without sequence or import, are not all these things natural for the reason that they are?" 2.

In spite of all this, we should believe in the freedom of

the will for the courage it will give us.

"Nothing endures but mortality, changeless change. Nevertheless, we speak of eternity, permanence, immortality, the absolute when nature seems an absolute. The Eternal Return is now. It is the eternal recommitment. . . but we must believe, the very affirmation of belief--is--free-will--puts courage into actions." 3.

There is hope for the doctrine of the freedom of the will



even in a mechanized, naturalistic view of man and his thought processes:

"Perpetual motion, squaring the circle, are only variants of the alchemical pursuit of the philosopher's stone, the transmutation of the baser metals, the cabalistic Abracadabra, the quest of the absolute. Man can't live on machinery alone, and the underfed soul of the past period of positivism craves more spiritual nourishment today. Hasn't the remarkable mathematician Henry Poincaré (author of Science and Hypothesis, The Value of Science, Science and Method) declared that between the construction of the spirit and the absolute truth there is an abyss caused by free choice and the voluntary elimination which have necessitated such inferences? Note the word 'free'; free-will is restored to its old and honourable estate in the hierarchy of thought." 1.

"Literally we are imprisoned for life, with the privilege of telephoning our cerebral control to ask it to phone us the news of outer existence. It's the greatest fairy-tale imaginable, our life. But it is not free--oh, no! In a physical sense we are the grand-children of vegetables which live by solar heat; and of the so-called lower animals--query: why lower? Like them we, too, are automaton, ruled by the same rigid laws; we borrow vitality from the vegetable kingdom, and we are nourished by this triple-distilled solar energy. . . . Our nervous system is the whole animal. And these nerves may be so finely spun that they receive messages from the Fourth Dimension of Space."2.

Here what looks like deterministic monism on the face of it is not contradictory to the principles of Humanism. Maybe the ethical imagination has its moorings in the Fourth Dimension of Space!

#### Summary of Preceding Humanistic Ideas

It is said that anything may be proved by the use of statistics and surely a random quoting of examples is open to the same objection. The examples quoted, however, have been chosen as representative of Huneker's ideas, not solely to foster the main idea of this thesis. Taking them for what they are worth,

1. Unicorns, Page 196
2. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 317



even in a mechanized, materialistic view of man and his thought

processes:

"Physical motion, according to the circle, are only variants of the chemical process of the philosopher's stone, the transmutation of the base metals, the chemical process before the quest of the alchemist. Man can't live on machinery alone, and the material soul of the past period of materialism were spiritual enlightenment today. Man's true nature is a spiritual being (Luther) of balance and harmony, the value of balance, balance and motion) defined that between the constitution of the spirit and the material world there is an equilibrium caused by free choice and the voluntary adaptation which have no considered such interest? Note the word 'free', 'free' will is restored to the old and honorable estate in the hierarchy of thought." I.

"Literally we are imprisoned for life, with the privilege of telephoning our cerebral control to ask it to phone us the news of outer existence. It's the greatest fairy-tale imaginable, our life. But it is not free--oh, no! In a physical sense we are the great children of vegetation which live by solar heat; and of the so-called lower animals--why lower? Like them we, too, are autonomous, ruled by the same rigid laws; we borrow vitality from the vegetable kingdom, and we are nourished by this crippled disabled solar energy. . . . Our nervous system is the whole animal. And these nerves may be so finely spun that they receive messages from the Fourth Dimension of Space." 2.

Here what looks like deterministic materialism on the face of it

is not contradictory to the principles of humanism. Maybe the

artificial imagination has its workings in the Fourth Dimension of

Space!

#### Summary of preceding Humanistic Ideas

It is said that anything may be proved by the use of statistics and surely a random quoting of examples is open to the same objection. The examples quoted, however, have been chosen as representative of Huxley's ideas, not solely to foster the main idea of this thesis. Taking them for what they are worth,



we see that Huneker did not disregard the value of the classics; that he saw life sanely and saw it whole; that he had proportion and discrimination; that he was not deceived by humanitarianism; that he was not a reformer; that he did not have the acquisitive instinct; that he was devoid of philistine tendencies; that he was not concerned with dogmas and creeds; that he had the Christian virtues and that one especially beloved of the Humanists, humility; that he recognized the Demon of the Absolute and the dualism inherent in life. We cannot be so positive regarding his religious feeling or regarding his belief in the freedom of the will but we have seen that in these ideas Huneker leans in the humanistic direction.

The way is not so clear as regards the question of objectivity and subjectivity, of the imposition of general terms upon a piece of criticism and this represents the crux of our consideration of Huneker as a humanistic critic.

Huneker tells us often enough that he has no interest in objectivity:

#### Subjectivity and Objectivity

In a letter to Edward P. Mitchell regarding a forthcoming newspaper article, he says:

"I've sought for odd types--the old dilettante; the art auctioneer; the woman without taste in pictures; the painter's hat of Hammerstein; M. Victor Maurel's collar modelled after Hyacinthe Rigaud; the cane of Herr Roosevelt--these are the general subjects. I had included one other, 'Crito the Critic,' but I feared it was too subjective. The rest I have sought for objectivity--odious word--for a dramatization of my spleen." 1.

we see that Emerson did not disregard the value of the classics; that he saw life as a whole; that he had a profound and characteristic; that he was not deceived by humanitarianism; that he was not a reformer; that he did not have the negative instinct; that he was devoid of political tendencies; that he was not concerned with dogmas and creeds; that he had the Christian virtues and that one especially beloved of the humanists, humility; that he recognized the Demon of the Absolute and the dualism inherent in life. We cannot be so positive regarding his religious feeling or regarding his belief in the freedom of the will but we have seen that in these ideas Emerson leans in the humanistic direction.

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Subjectivity and Objectivity

In a letter to Edward F. Mitchell regarding a forthcoming newspaper article, he says:

"I've bought for odd types--the old dilapidated; the art auctioneer; the women without taste in literature; the painter's hat of hammering; M. Victor Hugo's collar modeled after the famous figure; the name of Mary Rossetti--these are the general subjects. I had included one other, 'Crisis the Crisis,' but I feared it was too subjective. The last I have bought for objectivity--obvious words--for a dramatic action of my speech."



Regarding Anatole France: "After his clever formula that there is no such thing as objective criticism, that all criticism but records the adventures of one's soul among the masterpieces, France was attacked by Brunetière--of whom the ever-acute Mr. James once remarked that his 'intelligence has not kept pace with his learning.' Those critical watchwords (subjectivity and objectivity) are things of yester-year, and one hopes forever."

"He Anatole France demonstrated that in the matter of judgment we are prisoners of our ideas, and he also formed a school that has hardly done him justice, for every impressionistic value is not necessarily valid. It is easy to send one's soul boating among masterpieces and call the result 'criticism'; the danger lies in the contingency that one may not boast the power of artistic navigation possessed by Anatole France, a master steersman in the deeps and shallows of literature." 1.

"The genius beholds another world because he has a profounder conception of the world which lies before us all, inasmuch as it presents itself with more objectivity and distinctness than it does to less favored mortals." 2.

We are told in many places in Huneker's works that utter subjectivity is impossible; that the critic cannot, in any way, entirely divorce himself of his personality, whether he would or no. The following excerpt is from an essay on the music of Arnold Schoenberg in Ivory Apes and Peacocks:

"In the first place the personality of the listener is bound to obtrude itself, dissociation from one's ego--if such a thing were possible--would be intellectual death; only by the clear, persistent image of ourselves do we exist--banal psychology as old as the hills." 3.

Again,

"We know that the most 'objective'--comical old categories 'objective' and 'subjective'--philosophies are tinged by the temperaments of their makers; perhaps the chief characteristic of philosophers is their unphilosophic contempt for fellow-thinkers." 4.

Yet, as has been indicated, Huneker never believed that a flow of genuine impressions was enough to form the basis of a

1. Egoists, Page 153  
2. Variations, Page 17

3. Ivory Apes and Peacocks,  
Page 95  
4. Variations, Page 2



Regarding Aristotle's famous: "After his eleven formulae that there is no such thing as objective criticism, that all criticism but reveals the subjectivity of one's soul among the masterpieces, France was rescued by Gassendi--of whom the ever-acute Mr. James once remarked that his 'intellectualism has not kept pace with his learning.' Those critical waterwords (subjectivity and objectivity) are things of yesterday, and are hence forever."

"The Aristotle France demonstrated that in the matter of judgment we are prisoners of our ideas, and he also found a school that has hardly done him justice. For every intellectual value is not necessarily valid. It is easy to send one's soul floating among masterpieces and call this result 'criticism'; the danger lies in the contingency that one may not possess the power of artistic navigation possessed by Aristotle France, a master steersman in the deeps and shallows of literature." 1.

"The genius beholds another world because he has a profounder conception of the world which lies before us all, than as it presents itself with more objectivity and distinctness than it does to less favored mortals." 2.

We are told in many places in Munster's works that neither

subjectivity is impossible; that the critic cannot, in any way, entirely divorce himself of his personality, whether he would or

no. The following excerpt is from an essay on the music of

Arnold Schoenberg in Ivory Ages and Fashions:

"In the first place the personality of the listener is bound to obscure itself, dissociation from one's ego--if such a thing were possible--would be intellectual death; only by the clear, persistent image of ourselves do we exist--personal psychology as old as the hills." 3.

Again,

"We know that the most 'objective'--conceived old categories 'objective' and 'subjective'--philosophies are tinged by the temperaments of their makers; perhaps the chief characteristic of philosophy is their egotistic content and fellow-thinkers." 4.

Yet, as has been indicated, Munster never believed that a

flow of genuine expressions was enough to form the basis of a



criticism. Those who classify Hunecker as a pure impressionist fail to take this fact into consideration. There was always some sense of norm, of standard, of criterion, against which the impressions were rated, were it only, in some cases, Hunecker's innate good taste. Mere subjectivity is not enough.

"It's all well enough to talk of temperamental bias, but a critic must observe a few of the rules of the game, or else not play fair." 1.

The presence of standards in Hunecker's critical equipment is implied rather than stressed; yet we find such statements as these:

"Tolerance is often a virtue of sceptics--but is it a virtue? Good art is never obscene; the only obscene is bad art." 2.

Regarding Frank Wedekind: "His admirers speak of him as a unicorn, a man so original as to be without forerunners, without followers. A monster? For no one can escape the common law of descent, whether physical or spiritual." 3.

"Even the Pont Aven School, headed by Gauguin and Van Gogh, is dating. The truth is that the time factor is grossly overestimated. Good art in 1500 or 1830, or 1867 or 1918, remains good art." 4.

Two letters to his friend, John Quinn, dated respectively March 26, 1916 and April 7, 1916, do not sound like emanations from a pure impressionist:

"Remember, John, all these petty revolutions, interesting, even significant at times, will never even deflect for a moment the broad current of eternal art. It's so in music and literature; it's so in art. There is a norm, and these young chaps may fume and sputter, but back to it they must revert else rot and drop from the parent trunk." 5.

"I am told twenty times a month to stick to my last, music criticism and begad I think people are right. One must grow, but a good picture is as good in 1920 as the day it

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|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Letters, Page 63                     | 4. Steeplejack, Vol. 1, P. 241 |
| 2. Steeplejack, Vol. 1, P. 176          | 5. Letters, Page 206           |
| 3. Ivory Apes and Peacocks,<br>Page 123 |                                |



criticism. Those who classify themselves as pure impressionists will not take this fact into consideration. There was always some sense of humor, of skepticism, of criticism, against which the impressions were noted, were it only, in some cases, humor. There is always good sense. There is subjectivity is not enough.

"It's all well enough to talk of temperamental bias, but a critic must observe a few of the rules of the game, or else he has no right to say."

The presence of standards in literature's critical equipment is implied rather than expressed; yet we find such statements as

these:

"Tolerance is often a virtue of scepticism--but is it a virtue? Good art is never tolerant; the only tolerance is bad art."

Regarding Frank Wedekind: "His admirers speak of him as a modern, a man so original as to be without forerunners, without followers. A mystery? For no one can escape the common law of descent, whether physical or spiritual."

"Even the most advanced school, headed by Gaudin and Van Gogh, is dating. The point is that the time factor is grossly overestimated. Good art is 1880 or 1885, or 1887 or 1818, remains good art."

Two letters to his friend, John Quinn, dated respectively

March 26, 1916 and April 7, 1916, do not sound like examinations

from a pure impressionist:

"Remember, John, all these petty revolutions, intrigues, even significant at times, will never even deflect for a moment the broad current of eternal art. It's so in music and literature; it's so in art. There is a norm, and every young chap may come and go, but back to it they must revert else rot and drop from the present time."

"I am told twenty times a month to stick to my last, write criticism and judge I think people are right. One must grow, but a good picture is as good in 1920 as the day it



was painted, say 1900. I don't believe in schools or movements. There are only painters with talent. All the rest is ornament or superfluous." 1.

"It may be the decadence, as any art is in decadence which stakes the parts against the whole." 2.

In his criticism Huneker was an example of the golden mean. He was neither wholly impressionistic nor wholly judicial; he was analytic and synthetic; he was deductive and inductive, neither conservative nor radical. He believed the critic should have sympathy and sincerity. For him there was no identity of genius and taste.

#### Subjectivity Precludes Humanistic Rating

Where Huneker falls short in the set-up for the humanistic critic is in his failure to recast the account of the phenomena of criticism into the terms of the noumenal. He tells us he is not concerned with "general ideas," and if we mean by the term metaphysical concepts, that is true. The surprising thing is that there is so much in his criticism which can be related to general currents of thought when the nature of his contributions is considered. A person writing for the daily press cannot be overconcerned with philosophical matters. Possibly Huneker's great vitality and abounding interest in life precluded the quiet contemplation of the philosopher. At any rate, I think we must set Huneker down as deficient in relation to the capacity for abstract thought demanded of the humanistic critic.

#### Huneker's Subjectivity Not Unmitigated

Every criticism Huneker made, however, went up against the

1. Letters, Page 208
2. Bedouins, Page 78

was pointed out, say 1900. I don't believe in schools or movements. There are only painters with talent. All the rest is ornament or superficiality." 1.

"To say we are decadent, as any art is in decadence which attacks the parts against the whole." 2.

In his criticism Munster was an example of the golden mean.

He was neither wholly impressionistic nor wholly judgmental; he was analytic and synthetic; he was deductive and inductive, neither conservative nor radical. He believed the critic should have sympathy and sincerity. For him there was no identity of genius and taste.

#### Subjectivity Precludes Humanistic History

Where Munster falls short in the set-up for the humanistic critic is in his failure to regard the account of the phenomena of criticism in the terms of the necessary. He tells us he is not concerned with "general ideas," and if we mean by the term metaphysical concepts, that is true. The surprising thing is that there is so much in his criticism which can be related to general currents of thought when the nature of his contributions is considered. A person writing for the daily press cannot be overconcerned with philosophical matters. Possibly Munster's great vitality and abounding interest in life precluded the quiet contemplation of the philosopher. At any rate, I think we must not think of him as deficient in relation to the capacity for abstract thought demanded of the humanistic critic.

#### Munster's Subjectivity Not Unmitigated

Every critic, Munster made, however, went up against the



great sounding-board which was James G. Huneker and was rejected or accepted by its falseness or truth of tone. Huneker may not have been greatly occupied with general precepts. He didn't have to be for the purpose of arriving at a real estimate. In his erudition, his scholarship, his knowledge of all the arts, his "humanity" (which we shall assume to have the two meanings which he gave it; one, an interest in the classics, and two, that quality represented in the highest compliment a pupil pays his teacher when he calls him "human"), his sympathy, his immediate perception of the best minds, was the complete criterion for evaluating a work of art. He failed in so doing sometimes, as he would be the first to tell you, but even his most abject failures have some validity. He was equipped as few critics have been really to appraise a work of art. In short, when Huneker completed a criticism, it stood for representative human judgment by as representative a "human" as ever comes along. It wasn't that he didn't consider "general ideas" in reaching his conclusions, but they were a fundamental part of his equipment, something tacit, inherent, prerequisites. Surely his evaluations are clearer for the average reader without the philosophical jargon than they would have been with it.

Huneker reached that seemingly impossible Babbittian standard--he achieved intensity on a background of calm. He had sufficient life and eagerness to rescue his attitude from the dead-level a complete humanistic attainment always seems to imply.







### Romantic (Non-humanistic) Ideas in Hunecker's Work

Now let us consider the other side of the situation to see if any anti-humanistic traits have crept up the Romantic back stairs.

Impressionism, with its emphasis upon the experiences of the senses, is a romantic manifestation but I think it has been shown that Hunecker's was a tempered, governed impressionism, not a riot of sight and sound and little else.

Most of the romantic tendencies, whether of the real or of the inverted kind, we may cast aside as negative in the case of Hunecker, for instance:

#### The Natural Rights Theory

"Rousseau is to blame for the 'Social Contract' and the 'Equality' nonsense that has poisoned more than one nation's political idea." 1.

"Huysmans never betrayed the slightest interest in doctrines of equality; for him, as for Baudelaire, socialism, the education of the masses, or democratic prophylactics were hateful. . . . He did not believe in art for the multitude and the tableau of a billion humans bellowing to the moon the hymn of universal brotherhood made him shiver as well it might. . . . Art is for those who have the brains and patience to understand it. It is not a free port of entry for poet and philistine alike." 2.

#### Naturalism

As for naturalism, which is the inverted form of Romanticism:

"The art of fiction has become finer, and more spiritual, especially in England, where the influence of Henry James is more potent than in his native land. But dear progressive America is still in the throes of a naturalism which died at the birth of Zola's vilest offspring, La Terre. Mr. Howells set the fashion of realism, a tempered realism, though he stemmed from Jane Austen and Turgenev. His is

1. Egoists, Page 366
2. Ibid., Page 179

Now let us consider the other side of the situation to see

if any anti-romanticist critics have stepped up the romantic back

again.

Impressionism, with its emphasis upon the experience of

the senses, is a romantic manifestation but I think it has been

shown that modernism was a tempered, governed impressionism.

Not a riot of light and sound and little else.

Most of the romantic tendencies, whether of the real or of

the inverted kind, we may cast aside as negative in the case of

modernism, for instance:

#### The Naturalistic Theory

"Modernism is to blame for the 'Social Contract' and the

'epic' movement that has followed more than one pa-

tion's political idea."

"Modernism never betrayed the slightest interest in the

theory of epics; for him, as for modernism, socialists,

the education of the masses, or democratic organizations

were irrelevant. . . . He did not believe in the for the

multitude and the failure of a billion names following to

the book the hymn of universal brotherhood and his answer

as well as right. . . . It is for those who have the

principle and practice to understand it. It is not a time

point of entry for post and political alike."

#### Modernism

as for naturalism, which is the inverted form of Romanticism.

claim:

"The art of fiction has become more and more scientific,

especially in England, where the influence of Henry James

is more potent than in any other land. And deep progress-

ive America is still in the hands of a naturalist who

also at the birth of John's vision of fiction, in 1890.

Mr. Howells set the fashion of realism, a tempered realism,

though he borrowed from Jane Austen and Dickens. His is



the art of the miniature painter. Frank Norris followed him and Stephen Crane, both at a long distance, preceded by Henry B. Fuller (in his With the Procession and the Cliff-Dwellers). Zola was not a realist merely because he dwelt with certain unpleasant facts. He was a myopic romanticist writing in a style both violent and tumefied, the history of his soul in the latrines of life. Life as a whole he never saw steadily; it was for him more like a succession of lurid lantern slides. If, in the Court of Realism, Flaubert is king, then Zola ranks only as an excavator." 1.

"We know now that Zola was only masquerading in the gorgeous rags of romanticism with a vocabulary borrowed from Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, and Flaubert; we know, too, that despite the argot of L'Assommoir, the book is as romantic as a Bougeureau canvas--the formula is the same: highly glazed surfaces, smug sentiment, and pretty coloring." 2.

"We turn our heads the other way when his [Gorky's] women curse and rave. Walt Whitman, said Moncure Conway, brought the slop pail into the drawing-room; but for Gorky there is no drawing-room. Life is only a dung-heap." 3.

#### The Perfectibility of Man

"Man is not a perfectible animal; not on this side of eternity." 4.

"The interrogation posed on the horizon of our consciousness, regarding the perfectibility of mankind, is best answered by a definition of socialism as that religion which proves all men to be equally stupid." 5.

#### Temperamental Overflow

Huneker did not sanction the romantic urge to indulge in one's individual idiosyncrasy, to cultivate one's "temperamental overflow."

"Etching rules. Why? Because an artist of overwhelming genius set upon the art his seal. Because it is a consummate medium for expressing personality, and in all the arts personality is the slogan of the hour. We must bare our souls in our work, cry young folk; the rest, art included, can go hang! But the question is whether these same souls are worth the bother of such exposure." 6.

1. Steeplejack, Vol. 1, P. 270

2. Iconoclasts, Page 269

3. Ibid., Page 272

4. Egoists, Page 370

5. Ibid., Page 212

6. Variations, Page 78



the art of the artist's painter. Frank Norris followed him and George Bernard Shaw, both at a long distance, preceded by Henry M. Butler. In his last two volumes, *Life of a Great Artist* (1911) and *Life of a Great Artist* (1912), he dealt with certain important facts. He was a realist, romanticist writing in a style both vivid and unadorned. The history of the novel in the last years of life. Life is a whole he never saw steadily; it was for him more like a succession of hard lantern slides. It is the heart of the artist, Richard is King, then Zola ranks only as an excavator."

"We know now that Zola was only hesitating in the first years of romanticism with a vocabulary borrowed from Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, and Flaubert; we know, too, that despite the error of *Le roman expérimental*, the book is as romantic as a romance. The romantic is the same: slightly blurred shadows, small sentiment, and great color."

"The first two books the other way when his [Gorky's] words came and have. *White Whirls*, said someone in Norway, bringing the ship back into the drawing-room; but for Gorky there is no drawing-room. Life is only 'dang-ness'."

#### The Perfectibility of Man

"Man is not a perfectible animal; not on this side of eternity."

"The introduction poses on the notion of our consciousness, regarding the perfectibility of mankind, is best answered by a definition of socialism as that religion which proves all men to be equally stupid."

#### Experimental Overthrow

However did not sanction the romantic urge to indulge in one's individual idiosyncrasy, to cultivate one's "experimental overthrow."

"Eating rules. Why? Because an artist of overwhelming genius set upon the art his seal. Because it is a conservative medium for expressing personality, and in all the art personality is the sign of the hour. We must have our roots in our work, our young folk; the rest, art included, can go hang! But the question is whether these same souls are worth the bother of such exposure."



"Poe, then, like Chopin, did not die too soon. Neurotic natures, they lived their lives with the intensity which Walter Pater has declared is the true existence. 'To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. Failure is to form habits.' Alas! that way madness lies for the majority of mankind, notwithstanding the aesthetic exhortation of Pater. Poe and Chopin fulfilled the Pater conditions during their brief sojourn on our parent planet. They ever burned with the flame of genius and that flame devoured them. They were not citizens of moral repute. Nor did they accumulate 'mortal pelf.'" 1.

### Inspiration

Huneker had no part in the romantic belief that inspiration is more important than perspiration in creating a work of art.

"Stung by the gadfly of necessity, I had to follow my market: all newspaper men must. I was to learn that versatility is not heaven-sent, but is largely a matter of elbow-grease." 2.

"You may be sure of one thing--no one in the history of the Seven Arts has mastered his material save in the sweat of his brow. Work and days." 3.

Huneker sometimes called himself sentimental but it was in playful mood. Sentimentalism, an attribute of Romanticism, was something which he pounded incessantly.

### Sentimentalism

"That apocalyptic genius, Benjamin De Casseres, once divided our native fiction-mongers into four groups, Punk, Junk, Bunk, and Bull. Punk includes the ladies with triple-barreled names--there are plenty with two; Junk, all the writers on so-called social service, pollyannas, new-thoughters, and pseudo-psychologists; Bunk is the fashionable novel; and Bull applies to the Jack London school; ramping, roaring, robust rough-riders and heroes from the wilds of the Woolly West; bastards of the Bret Harte fiction. It is a just classification. We needs must have our 'art' dosed with saccharine." 4.

"If you happen to write a best-seller, you are acclaimed a genius. And when you think it over, a man who can sell a million copies of a book compounded of sentimental slush



"Yes, then, like Caspary, did not die too soon. Romantic  
 nature, they lived their lives with the intensity which  
 writer Peter has declared is the true existence. 'To burn  
 always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this  
 ecstasy, is success in life. Failure is to form habits.'  
 Alas! that way means lies for the majority of mankind,  
 notwithstanding the aesthetic exhortation of Peter. The  
 and George fulfilled the Peter conditions through their  
 only return on our planet. They even burned with  
 the flame of genius and that flame devoured them. They  
 were not citizens of mortal realm. Nor did they accom-  
 plish 'mortal gain.'"

### Imagination

Husserl had no part in the romantic belief that imagination  
 is more important than perspiration in creating a work of art.

"Stung by the gadfly of necessity, I had to follow my  
 market: all newspaper men must. I was so sure that  
 versatility is not a virtue, but is largely a matter of  
 elbow-grease."

"You may be sure of one thing--no one in the history of  
 the Seven Arts has mastered his material save in the sweat  
 of his brow. Work and days."

Husserl sometimes called himself sentimental but it was in  
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 something which he founded incessantly.

### Sentimentalism

"That esoteric genius, Benjamin De Casseres, once divid-  
 ed our native fiction-mongers into four groups, Punk, Junk,  
 Bunk, and Bull. Punk includes the ladies with triple-bar-  
 reled names--there are plenty with two; Junk, all the  
 writers on so-called social service, politicians, new-  
 thoughters, and pseudo-psychologists; Bunk is the fashion-  
 able novel; and Bull applies to the Jack London school;  
 rhapsody, ranting, robust rough-riders and heroes from the  
 wilds of the woolly west; bastards of the best native fic-  
 tion. It is a just classification. We needs must have  
 our 'art' mixed with accessories."

"If you happen to write a best-seller, you are admitted a  
 genius. And when you think it over, a man who can sell a  
 million copies of a book compounded of sentimental ideas



and slimy piety must be a genius. What else is he? An artistic writer? No. Respectable? Yes." 1.

"A liquorish sentimentality is the ever-threatening rock upon which the bark of young American novelists goes to pieces. (Pardon the mixed metaphor.) Be sentimental and you will succeed! We agree with Dostoevsky that in fiction, as well as in life, there are no general principles, only special cases. But these cases, could they not be typical? even if there are not types, only individuals. And are men and women so intralled by the molasses of sentimentalism in life? Have the motion-pictures hopelessly deranged our critical values? I know that in America charity covers a multitude of mediocrities, nevertheless, I am loath to believe that all one reads in praise of wretched contemporary fiction is meant in earnest." 2.

### Summary of Romantic Ideas in Huneker's Work

So far, our qualities of Romanticism are on the negative side as far as Huneker is concerned. He did not believe in the Natural Rights Theory, or in Naturalism, or in the Perfectibility of Man. Cultivation of one's personal peculiarities without restraint was to him inartistic. He knew inspiration must be supplemented by hard work. He abhorred sentimentality. A cosmopolitan of cosmopolitans, a steeplejack of the arts, a frequenter of the haunts of men, one cannot imagine him, of all people, retreating to idyllic nature and the simple life. He was a foe of Puritanism and of laws limiting one's personal freedom but anti-conventional he could not be called. He protests in a letter to Benjamin De Casseres on March 29, 1920 anent dedicating Bedouins to his wife that he was called a Bohemian when he was nothing but an old bourgeois. 3.

### Interest in Outstanding Personalities

There was, however, one respect in which he might be

1. Variations, Page 11
2. Unicorns, Page 85
3. Letters, Page 290



and what they must be a genius. What else is there  
in the world? Yes, I know.

"A literary sentimentality is the ever-present  
ghost which the name of young American novelists goes to  
place. (London and mixed London.) As sentimental and  
you will succeed! We agree with Dostoevsky that in the  
life, as well as in art, there are no general principles,  
only special cases. But these cases, could they not be  
typical even if there are not types, only individuals.  
And are not women so influenced by the mores of  
sentimentality in life? Have the nation-pictures novelists  
imagined our critical values? I know that in America  
sentimentality covers a multitude of motives, nevertheless,  
I am loath to believe that all are made in prison or  
wretched contemporary fiction is made in prison." S.

#### Summary of Howard's Ideas in Howard's Work

So far, our definition of Romanticism is on the negative  
side as far as Howard is concerned. He did not believe in the  
Natural Rights Theory, or in Naturalism, or in the possibility  
of man. Cultivation of one's personal peculiarities without  
restriction was to him fantastic. He knew inspiration must be  
and learned by hard work. He admitted sentimentality. A con-  
sideration of contemporaries, a skepticism of the arts, a free-  
dom of the human mind, one cannot imagine him, of all  
people, repelling to the life nature and the simple life. He  
was a foe of Puritanism and of laws limiting one's personal  
freedom but anti-conventional he could not be called. He pro-  
tests in a letter to Benjamin Franklin on March 23, 1790  
about declining freedom to his wife that he was called a bo-  
hemian when he was nothing but an old bourgeois.

#### Interest in American Personalities

There are, however, one respect in which he might be



charged with being romantic. This was his marked interest in outstanding personalities, men of unusual accomplishments, eccentric geniuses, "originals." He says:

"Set me down as hopelessly romantic, as a cultivator of the cult of great artists in an age when there are only imitators or pigmies. It's born in me, this species of artistic snobbery; I can't help it." 1.

"In my artistic and literary Zoo there are many queer creatures but it is a mistake to suppose them all freaks. . . . However, I am not setting up an alibi for the sanity of my favorite artists and writers. It is not necessary. There is, take it by and large, more madness among mediocre persons. A little madness is a necessary ingredient in the composition of genius. Nor do I claim that my apes, peacocks, unicorns, egoists, visionaries, melomaniacs, and steeplejacks are all geniuses. Again, mediocrity is to the fore, a mediocrity tempered by eccentricities." 2.

"When I spoke of my Zoo and its queer inmates, I was thinking of what Paul Elmer More wrote in 1915: 'How in the name of heaven do you have the will-power to read all those eccentrics and maniacs whom you seem to know by heart? A week of them would kill me with ennui. After all, there is nothing that really lasts and maintains its interest but the sane and the reticent.' Words of wisdom. But sane genius also has its crazy wards, its padded cells: Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe; besides my 'maniacs' are a pretty sane lot. Some drank. Some murdered sleep, yet Chopin, Stendhal, Anatole France, Richard Strauss, Pater, Wagner, Baudelaire, Manet, Brahms--the list is long and far from insane, for I take it neither Poe nor Chopin were quite mad. Drugs and alcohol did for Poe. Mad, naked William Blake was peculiar, to say the least. Yet a god-intoxicated man. No, I don't hold with the eminent critic that is Mr. More, and I yield to no one in my admiration of Wordsworth, of the Lake School, of the placid and delightful eighteenth-century essayists. A chacun son poison!" 3.

Concerning art and life Huneker was the person about whom it might have been first written: "Humanus sum, et nihil humanum a me alienum puto." Talent, in whatever wrapping it came, was interesting to him. If it didn't conform in trappings to

1. Variations, Page 55
2. Steeplejack, Volume 2, Page 235
3. Ibid., Volume 2, Page 235



charged with being romantic. This was his chief interest in  
 overhauling personalities, men of unusual accomplishments, ec-  
 centric geniuses, "originals." He says:

"Set me down as hopelessly romantic, as a cultivator of  
 the cult of great artists in an age when there are only  
 lackluster or plagiaries. It's born in me, this species of  
 artistic snobbery; I can't help it."

"In my artistic and literary life there are many phases  
 of experience but it is a mistake to suppose them all French.  
 . . . However, I am not seeking to set aside for the sanity  
 of my favorite artists and writers. It is not necessary.  
 There is, as it were, a large, more madness among madmen  
 one person. A little madness is a necessary ingredient  
 in the composition of genius. Now do I claim that my spe-  
 cimens, unicorns, egotists, visionaries, melodramas, and  
 apocalyptic are all geniuses. Again, mediocrity is to  
 the fore, a mediocre, compared by accident."

"When I spoke of my love and the great writers, I was think-  
 ing of what Paul Elmer More wrote in 1918: 'How in the  
 name of heaven do you have the will-power to read all  
 those essences and masterpieces when you seem to know by  
 heart? A week of them would kill me with ennui. After  
 all, there is nothing that really lasts and maintains its  
 interest but the same and the repeated.' Words of wisdom,  
 but some genius also has the crazy words, the padded cells,  
 James, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe; besides my 'maniacs'  
 and a pretty good lot. Some drunk. Some numbered after  
 yet Chopin, Schubert, Arnold Schoenberg, Richard Strauss,  
 Weber, Wagner, Brahms, Liszt, Debussy--the list is long  
 and far from innocent, for I take it neither for nor Chopin  
 were quite mad. Drugs and alcohol did for some. And  
 naked William Blake was peculiar, to say the least. And  
 a hot-tempered man. No, I don't hold with the eminent  
 critic that as Mr. More, and I yield to no one in my ad-  
 miration of Wordsworth, of the Lake School, of the placid  
 and delightful eighteenth-century essayists. A chosen and  
 poison!"

Concerning art and life Huxley was the person about whom  
 it might have been first written: "Huxley was, at first, no  
 more a man without a poet." Talent, in whatever wrapping it came,  
 was interesting to him. If it didn't conform in thoughts to



the classics of the past, that was no reason for excluding it. Classics can be born today as well as in The Golden Age of Greece or the Augustan Age. Naturally, they will not have the same form, but, as Huneker often maintained, excellence is excellence, regardless of the time and medium in which it appears. Huneker was discovering the classics of the future. In his great zest for the seven arts any outstanding newcomer was examined but, unless his contribution was worthy, he didn't become a certified member of the "Zoo."

"Whenever a new poet or philosopher appears he is straightway accused of tampering with the moral currency. This is only mediocrity's mode of adjusting to marked mental disproportions. . . . So let us cheer up, read Pater, Baudelaire, and the Bible--from which they derive--and blench not before the dissonantal batteries of the Neo-Scythian composers." 1.

"When I praise the dissonantal art of Michael Artzibashef it is not with the idea that either his style or his pessimism should be aped. That way unoriginality lies. But I do contend that in the practice of his art, its sincerity, its profundity, he might be profitably patterned after by the younger generation. Art should elevate as well as amuse. Must fiction always be silly and shallow? It need be neither sordid nor didactic." 2.

Of all the possible romantic manifestations surely Huneker may be allowed one. He couldn't be a representative human being without some touch of romanticism.

#### Summary of Humanistic and Romantic Tendencies in Huneker

As we have seen from a detailed examination of the main precepts of the humanistic belief, Huneker conforms in every aspect of that belief except the idea of freedom of the will and the value of subjectivity and objectivity. We cannot say

1. Variations, Page 34
2. Unicorns, Page 95

the classics of the past, there was no reason for excluding it. Classics can be born today as well as in the golden age of Greece or the Augustan age. Naturally, they will not have the same form, but, as Hamaker often maintained, excellence is excellence, regardless of the time and medium in which it appears. Hamaker was discovering the classics of the future. In his great quest for the seven arts any outstanding newcomer was examined but, unless the contribution was worthy, he didn't become a certified member of the "Academy."

"Whenever a new poet or philosopher appears he is usually waylaid by the temptation of the novel language. This is only a temporary mode of adjusting to a new mental discipline. . . . He let us cheer up, read faster, harder, faster, and the little from which every nerve and muscle not before the dissonant batteries of the Neo-Scholastic composer."

"When I praise the dissonant art of Michael Ardenbach it is not with the idea that either his style or his position should be copied. That way monotonously lies. But I do condemn that in the practice of his art, its aimlessness, its profundity, he might be profitably patterned after by the younger generation. Art should elevate as well as amuse. That fiction always be silly and shallow. It need be neither serious nor didactic." 2.

Of all the possible romantic manifestations surely Hamaker may be allowed one. He couldn't be a representative human being without some touch of romanticism.

#### Summary of Humanistic and Romantic Tendencies in Hamaker

As we have seen from a detailed examination of the main precepts of the humanistic belief, Hamaker conforms in every aspect of that belief except the idea of freedom of the will and the value of subjectivity and objectivity. We cannot say



that his attitude toward freedom of the will is contrary to humanistic belief because he usually leaves us the loophole of the possibility of the nervous system's receiving impulses and ideas beyond the scope of material things. Huneker sees the need of the belief in freedom of the will and the possibility of its existence. According to Professor Babbitt, the mere idea of the freedom of the will is enough to justify its existence.

I dare say Huneker was like most human beings--on some days he was "the captain of his soul" and on others he was the most insignificant private in the forces of deterministic compulsion. Life may be like a multiple-choice examination: one has the prerogative of choice but what guarantee is there that the way one chooses has not been set and determined by forces and factors outside one's control? The words, "I am the master of my fate," may be crammed down one's throat by the next person who happens to turn the next corner. The significant thing is to will in spite of all the gods and all worldly obstacles. Huneker correctly appraised one of the main ideas in Ibsen. It is to will even though one's will be disastrous, even though it bring one's universe toppling about one's ears.<sup>1</sup> At least, Huneker would agree with the Humanists that man has the power to will.

#### Unconcern with General Ideas Precludes Rating as Humanist

The main bar, however, to classifying Huneker as a Humanist comes in his opposition and aversion to definite systems of thought. His bent to eclecticism would probably assert itself,

1. Iconoclasts, Page 132

that his attitude toward freedom of the will is contrary to the  
 mechanistic belief because he usually leaves the question of  
 the possibility of the nervous system's receiving impulses and  
 ideas beyond the scope of material things. Huxley sees the  
 need of the belief in freedom of the will and the possibility  
 of its existence. According to Professor Dewey, the mere idea  
 of the freedom of the will is enough to justify its existence.  
 I dare say Huxley was like most human beings--on some  
 days he was "the captain of his soul" and on others he was the  
 most insignificant private in the forces of deterministic com-  
 pulsion. Life may be like a multiple-choice examination: one  
 has the prerogative of choice but what happens is more or less  
 the way one chooses has not been set and determined by forces  
 and factors outside one's control. The words, "I am the master  
 of my fate," may be crumpled down one's throat by the next per-  
 son who happens to turn the next corner. The significant thing  
 is to will in spite of all the gods and all worldly obstacles.  
 Huxley correctly appraised one of the main ideas in Islam. It  
 is to will even though one's will be disastrous, even though it  
 bring one's universe toppling about one's ears. At least,  
 Huxley would agree with the Humanists that man has the power  
 to will.

#### Unconscious with General Ideas Precludes Acting as Humanist

The main bar, however, to classifying Huxley as a Humanist  
 comes in his opposition and aversion to definite systems of  
 thought. His best to selection would probably assert itself.



if he were alive to consider the humanistic proposals. He would not accept every humanistic idea merely because it would be the "regular" thing to do for a Humanist, any more than he would accept every article in a creed. It might be that he would subscribe to every doctrine of the Humanists except this matter of general ideas, as he seems to in his writings. Yet this matter of ultimate concern with the noumenal instead of the phenomenal is a vital point in the humanistic creed, and we cannot classify as Humanist anyone not subscribing to its truth.

Huneker's romantic tendency implied in his interest in unusual individuals is but another manifestation of his concern with subjectivity instead of objectivity. "The representative human values" were surely implied with Huneker. Every man has them. Man, merely as ordinary man, is interesting, but the fellow who has these qualities plus some others or the man who has some of these basic qualities in paucity or in excess of the average amount is even more interesting. Huneker would have exclaimed with Lola Ridge:

"I love those spirits  
That men stand off and point at,  
Or shudder and hood up their souls--  
Those ruined ones,  
Where Liberty has lodged an hour  
And passed like flame,  
Bursting asunder the too small house." 1.

And these individualistic tendencies are as much a human possession and attribute as the more humdrum, ordinary, human manifestations. It is only that they aren't so common. It isn't a question of Huneker's denying the value of stock ideas or

1. The New Poetry, Monroe and Henderson, Editors, Page 415  
Debris, by Lola Ridge

it is more alive to consider the humanistic problems. It would not accept every humanistic idea merely because it would be the "regular" thing to do for a humanist, any more than he would accept every article in a creed. It might be that he would subscribe to every doctrine of the humanists except this matter of general ideas, as he seems to in his writings. Yet this matter of abstract concepts with the humanist instead of the phenomenon is a vital point in the humanistic creed, and we cannot classify as humanist anyone not subscribing to its truth. Hume's romantic tendency implied in his interest in the usual individual is but another manifestation of his concern with subjectivity instead of objectivity. "The representative human values" were surely implied with Hume. Every man has them. Man, merely an ordinary man, is interesting, but the fellow who has these qualities plus some others or the man who has some of these basic qualities in plenty or in excess or the average amount is even more interesting. Hume would have exclaimed with John Keats:

"I love those spirits  
That men stand off and point at,  
Or shudder and hood up their souls--  
Those ruined ones,  
Whose liberty has lodged an hour  
And passed like flame,  
Bursting away the too small house."

And these individualistic phenomena are as much a human possession and attribute as the more human, ordinary, human manifestations. It is only that they aren't so common. It isn't a question of Hume's denying the value of stock ideas or



principles. Authors who contradicted them would be more interesting to him because they did contradict them but that would not damage the essential verity of the main principles attacked. Huneker preferred to look at each man's offering for what it was worth in terms of general excellence, unhampered by adherence to any schematic system of abstractions. As an example of the excellence of this method over a more philosophical handling of material, somebody has pointed out the superiority of Huneker's essay on Nietzsche for the average person over Paul Elmer More's treatise on the same subject which Mencken has damned in characteristic fashion:

"Read More on Nietzsche if you want to find out just how stupid criticism can be, and yet show the outward forms of sense." 1.

Huneker was intensely interested in abstractions per se. Consider the mysticism of his short stories and his preoccupation with metaphysical ideas as shown in the articles on The Fourth Dimension in Unicorns, on Creative Involution in the same volume, the articles on Mystics in Egoists, and other references throughout the complete writings. Interesting as these ideas were to Huneker, however, they were still theories, not inflexible guides for the testing of worth in general writing. He kept them in their places. Their places were not, in his conception of the fitness of things, in concrete critiques for the general audience. Write fiction where you can indulge them to your heart's content. It's a fantastic realm and will admit them on the basis of their intrinsic worth. Don't intrude them

1. A Book of Prefaces, by H. L. Mencken, Page 158
2. Unicorns, Page 203
3. Ibid., Page 195
4. Egoists, Page 269

principles. Authors who contradicted them would be more interested in his theories than they did in the actual facts of the matter. The essential verity of the main principles attacked was not in doubt in terms of general excellence, unimpaired by minor defects in any systematic system of abstraction. As an example of the excellence of this method over a more philosophical handling of material, somebody has pointed out the superiority of Huxley's essay on Hierarchy for the average person over any other writer's treatment of the same subject which Huxley has claimed in characteristic fashion:

"Read more on Hierarchy if you want to find out just how stupid criticism can be, and you know the outward form of sense."

Huxley was intensely interested in abstraction per se. His rigor and mysticism of his short stories and his preoccupation with metaphysical ideas as shown in the articles on The Fourth Dimension in Language, on Creative Imagination in the same vein, was, like articles on Myths in English, and other references throughout the complete writings. Interesting as these ideas were to Huxley, however, they were still chaotic, not unified. This guides for the handling of words in general writing. He kept them in their places. Their places were not, in his conception of the fitness of things, in concrete criticism for the general audience. While fiction where you can recognize them to your heart's content. It's a fantastic realm and will admit them on the basis of their intrinsic worth. Don't include them



as actualities in criticism.

Because of this lack of concern with abstract thought in his criticism, we are deterred from branding Huneker with the term, Humanist, though he possesses most of the humanistic qualifications. Considering his aversion to wearing the conformist livery of any school, it is perhaps just as well. We should be sacrificing his individuality for a term of doubtful permanent value.

As we have noted before, Huneker believed it was impossible to attain a really objective article of criticism. The personality of the critic was bound to intrude. In spite of the critic's best intentions and practices, a measure of self-interest is inescapable. In a sense, our age is our instrument for observation and, in correct the possible errors of refraction, Huneker believed that the critic should make an appeal of his own beliefs, prejudices, and tendencies so that the reader may discount or enhance what the critic has to say in the light of his personal leanings and thereby arrive at an impartial, objective concept of the work of art.

"A critic should confess his limitations, draw up at the beginning of a book a formal narrative of his temperament, prejudices, his likes and dislikes. A French critic, M. de Noailles, did this, and has since served as an example for the English writer, John G. Robinson. That your readers would know what to expect, would discount critical unconsciousness, would tell them that your grandfather was a Frenchman and that your great-grandfather was a Frenchman. This is an Apologia, but an illuminating diagram." 1.

"I have written enough to give you a fair idea of my mental and physical characteristics, so that you will judge

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Because of this lack of concern with abstract concepts in  
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## Huneker as a Critic

### Huneker's Ideas About Criticism

In attempting any just appraisal of Huneker as a critic, it will be pertinent to consider what Huneker believed the function and procedure of the critic should be and what his equipment and aim.

### Impossibility of Complete Objectivity

As we have noted before, Huneker believed it was impossible to attain a really objective article of criticism. The personality or the bias of the critic was bound to intrude. In spite of the critic's best intentions and practices, some element of self is inescapable. In a sense, our ego is our instrument for observation and, to correct the possible errors of refraction, Huneker believed that the critic should make an avowal of his own beliefs, prejudices, and tendencies so that the reader may discount or enhance what the critic has to say in the light of his personal leanings and thereby arrive at an impartial, objective concept of the work of art.

"A critic should confess his limitations, draw up at the beginning of a book a formal scenario of his temperament, prejudices, his likes and dislikes. A French critic, Hennequin, did this, and has since served as an exemplar for the English writer, John M. Robinson. Then your readers would know what to expect, would discount radical utterances on hearing that your grandfather had been a Fenian or that your aunt was opposed to female suffrage. This is no Apologia, but an illuminating diagram." 1.

"I have written enough to give you a fair idea of my mental and physical characteristics, so that you will judge

Husserl's Issues About Criticism

In regarding any just appraisal of Husserl as a critic, it will be pertinent to consider what Husserl believed the function and procedure of the critic should be and what his object and aim.

Impossibility of Complete Objectivity

As we have noted before, Husserl believed it was impossible to attain a really objective article of criticism. The personal-ity of the critic was bound to intrude. In spite of the critic's best intentions and practices, some element of self is inescapable. In a sense, our ego is our instrument for observation and, to correct the possible errors of reflection, Husserl believed that the critic should make an account of his own beliefs, prejudices, and tendencies so that the reader may discount or enhance what the critic has to say in the light of his personal feelings and thereby arrive at an impartial, objective concept of the work of art.

"A critic should confess his limitations, draw up an account of a book a formal statement of his temperament, prejudices, his likes and dislikes, a personal critic, Edmund Husserl, did this, and has since served as an example for the English writer, John M. Robinson. Then your readers would know what to expect, would discount rational utterances on hearing that your grandfather had been a Jew or that your aunt was opposed to female suffrage. This is no apology, but an illuminating diagram." 1.

"I have written enough to give you a fair idea of my mental and physical characteristics, so that you will judge



the critic as he should be. This is the method suggested by Hennequin, of which I told you. A moral précis of the critic and a peek at his temperament, then much that is dark becomes light." 1.

### Characteristics of Huneker Which Show in His Work

Huneker tells us many things which prove his criticism the product of his own interesting personality. He was a shy boy, shrinking from contests with other boys, an omnivorous reader, early acquiring the foundation for his amazing erudition, and a dreamer, but essentially a real boy.

"I long suffered from shyness, absurd sentimentality and a horror of the actual." 2.

He confesses to a lack of capacity for hatred:

"Probably the gravest defect in my character is my inability to hate anyone, or anything for more than five minutes, except hypocrisy and noise." 3.

We learn of his law-office apprenticeship and smile at the idea of Huneker's being a lawyer, even though with his wide knowledge and his remarkable verbal memory, he could have cited case on case to the confusion of his opponents. Was his law-office experience an early indication of his later disinclination for general theories?

"Naturally, I didn't make perceptible progress in the law. I absorbed the curriculum as a sponge absorbs liquid. My preceptor examined me at intervals, and it was then I first noted what I call my mechanical memory. I memorised as would a parrot. I repeated pages without knowing their meaning. The big technical phrases I gobetted as a dog does a bone. Terminology of any sort always appealed to me. I became proficient in phrases. With medical, or scientific terminology, it is the same, whether anatomy, geology, astronomy, or cookery, the technical verbalisms were easy to remember. My judgment centres were not much exercised, so that when I underwent regulation examinations at

1. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 206
2. Ibid., Volume 1, Page 14
3. Ibid., Volume 1, Page 24



the critic as he should be. This is the method suggested by Hume, of which I told you. A novel critic of the critic and a peek at his temperament, then what time is dark passage light. I.

### Characteristics of Hume's Which Show in His Work

Hume tells us many things which prove his criticism the product of his own interesting personality. He was a gay boy, thinking from contacts with other boys, an omnivorous reader, early acquiring the foundation for his amazing erudition, and a grammar, but essentially a real boy.

"I long suffered from amnesia, almost sentimentality and a horror of the actual." 2.

He confesses to a lack of capacity for hatred:

"Probably the greatest defect in my character is my inability to hate anyone, or anything for more than five minutes, except hypocrisy and noise." 3.

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the Law School, or during the law course at the University I had no trouble in reeling off page after page, because I simply let my memory prompt and turn over in my mind each page as it was finished. But put me to writing out opinions on a possible case, and my vaunted memory collapsed. Not taking the slightest interest necessarily I had nothing to say. Later in life I met pianists who could play hundreds of pieces. I have questioned them and in nine instances out of ten I found the same mechanical memory as mine. They saw the note-groups and the pages, but the musical idea, or its emotional expression, did not much concern them. Ideas were not then my shibboleth." 1.

Reading that Blackstone's English style interested him more than the legal principles involved, we are not surprised that he never became a lawyer.

### Interest in Music

Music became the illuminating force in his life, his favorite among the seven arts. His preference was for pure music, rather than operatic or other forms. In his day he was accounted a world authority on Chopin and Brahms. Music undoubtedly colored his thinking as well as his expression. He often exclaims at one's inability to express the appreciation of music in terms of the actual.

"'You write of music as if it were a living thing,' said Arthur Symonds to me in a memorable letter. Music is a living thing for me, as living as any vital organism. It lives when it enters the porches of my ears, and it is a living memory. To write about it is quite hopeless. You can describe a picture, a statue, a cathedral, and quote a poem; but you may not describe a symphony." 2.

### Interest in the Seven Arts

His interest in the other arts was only less than his love for music and was sufficient to gain him the rating of an expert in those fields. He thought of any one of the arts in

1. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 119
2. Ibid., Volume 2, Page 201

the law school, on hearing the law course at the University I had no trouble in turning off my "after" page, because I simply let my memory project and turn over in my mind each page as it was finished. But now we go to writing out copies on a possible case, and my wanted memory collapsed. Not taking the all interest necessarily I had nothing to say. Later in life I was glad that I had not hundreds of cases. I have questioned them and in nine instances out of ten I found the same mechanical answer as mine. They saw the bone-structure and the paper, but the actual idea, or the emotional expression, did not reach them. These ideas were not even my "unconscious." 1.

Reading that Blackstone's English style interested him more than the legal principles involved, we are not surprised that he

never became a lawyer.

### Interest in Music

Music became the dominating force in his life, his favorite among the seven arts. His preference was for pure music, rather than operatic or other forms. In his day he was accounted as a world authority on Gounod and Wagner. Music undoubtedly colored his thinking as well as his expression. He often exclaimed at one's inability to express the suggestion of music in terms of the actual.

"You write of music as if it were a living thing," said Arthur Symonds to me in a memorable letter. Music is a living thing for me, as living as any vital organism. It lives when it enters the corridors of my ears, and it is a living memory. To write about it is quite hopeless. You can describe a picture, a scene, a cathedral, and quote a poem; but you may not describe a symphony." 2.

### Interest in the Seven Arts

His interest in the other arts was only less than his love for music and was sufficient to gain him the rating of an expert in those fields. The knowledge of any one of the arts in



terms of the others and one of his fondest dreams was that of a synthesis of the arts.

"I muddled the Seven Arts in a grand old stew. I saw music, heard colour, tasted architecture, smelt sculpture and fingered perfume. A mad carnival of the senses." . . . . Certain musical tones evoke certain colours. And if you investigate you will discover that the aesthetic terminology of painting resembles that of music. I believed in employing the whole keyboard of analogies, so my criticism often proved trying to my readers, but not to me. I needs must educate them. The arts are separate, yet, as Walter Pater says, all travel towards a central sun in some remote constellation. But I abused the scheme, and I am not sorry." 1.

### Allusiveness

Huneker accounts for some of this mingling of the arts by telling us that he has a centrifugal temperament. One of the things which make his criticism difficult to read, is his continual branching off where allusion leads. We eventually come back after a more interesting journey than the straight-away would have been but the deviation is often confusing.

"When President Wilson spoke of his 'single-track mind,' he merely proved that by powerful concentration he was able to canalise one idea, to focus it, and thus dispose of it. This inhibitory power is not possessed by everyone. I, for example, have a polyphonic mind. I enjoy the simultaneous flight of a half-dozen trains of ideas, which run on parallel tracks for a certain distance, then disappear, arriving nowhere. This accounts for my half-mad worship of the Seven Arts which have always seemed one single art; when I first read Walter Pater's suggestion that all the other arts aspire to the condition of music, I said, 'That's it,' and at once proceeded to write of painting in terms of tone, of literature as if it were only form and color, and of life as if it is a promenade of flavours. Now, I admit that this method apart from its being confusing to the reader, is also aesthetically false. I didn't require Professor Babbitt to tell us that in his New Laocoon. The respective substance of each art is different, and not even the extraordinary genius of Richard Wagner could fuse



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forms of the arts and one of his fondest dreams was that of a



disparate dissimilarities. The musician in him dominated the poet, dramatist, and scene-painter. And in this paragraph I am precisely demonstrating what I spoke of--my polyphonic habit of thinking, if thinking it may be thus called. I often suffer from a 'split' or dissociated personalities, hence my discursiveness--to call such a fugitive ideation by so mild a name. But I started to tell you of my maternal grandfather and I am winding up on Wagner. Talk about 'free fantasy' in a modern tone-poem, or a five-voiced fugue, or a juggler spinning six plates at once!" 1.

Again,

"President Wilson has the centripetal temperament, or as he puts it, a 'one-track mind.' So has my friend, Mr. Wickersham. Both men concentrate. Colonel Roosevelt has the centrifugal cast of mind; evidently I have the same. I fly off with ease on any tempting tangent, also off my handle. The aptitude displayed by the Yankee for a half-dozen pursuits is the sign-manual of the centrifugal soul. It is pleasant to hear the whirring of its wheels though they serve no particular purpose. Thrashing the sea, eating the air promise-crammed, filling the belly with the east wind, fighting windmills--these are a few attributes of the centrifugalist. He is nothing if not versatile. His intensity lasts ten minutes. He is focal in consciousness, as the psychologists say, but his marginal subconsciousness is strongly obtruded. The sensory periphery is more masterful than the hub of his being. . . . The centrifugalist is usually an optimist. All is for the best in this best of demi-mondes. The flowers of evil that blossom in the hothouse of hell become pretty pansies when plucked by a centrifugal poet." 2.

### Eclecticism

His philosophy was eclectic, culled from the most enticing flowerbeds:

"Eclectic is my taste in creeds and cultures. And in cultured eclecticism may be found the shallows and depths, defects and virtues of our times." 3.

### Sympathy and Tolerance

This is another indication of Huneker's lack of interest in general ideas or fixed systems of thought but it is also a

1. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 22
2. Ibid., Volume 1, Page 135
3. Ibid., Volume 1, Page 208



disparate dissimilarities. The musician in his glorified  
the poet, dramatist, and assassin. And in this sense  
I am practically demonstrating what I spoke of--my  
polycentric habit of thinking, in claiming it may be that  
called. I often suffer from a 'split' or dissociated per-  
sonality, hence my dissimilarity--to call such a thing  
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## Centrifugalism

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"Eclectic is my taste in creeds and cultures. And in only  
three eclecticism may be found the shallow and comely,  
beasts and virtues of our times." 3.

## Sympathy and Tolerance

This is another indication of Wheeler's lack of interest

in general ideas or fixed systems of thought but it is also a



great factor in fostering his sympathy and tolerance of view.

"That absence of 'tendenz' which William James complained about in my Egoists, a refusal on my part to indulge in so-called 'general views,' in any neat little theory or 'problem,' met the approval of Remy De Gourmont, who detested phrases and empty formulas." 1.

### Humility

Critics, even the great ones, have "blind spots."

"The 'creative' critics are few. Montaigne, Goethe, Sainte-Beuve, Taine, Baudelaire, Georg Brandes, Nietzsche, Pater, Benedetto Croce, Havelock Ellis, M. Arnold, Arthur Symonds, Anatole France, De Gourmont, Edgar Saltus, Brownell--The list might be spun out, but these names suffice. Yet my idol among them, Sainte-Beuve, missed Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, and to Victor Hugo was inconsiderate--possibly on account of his affair with Adèle Hugo. Consider the ossuaries of literature eternally embalmed in the amber of Sainte-Beuve's style, a fatal immortality for so many futile butterflies, and you will admit that he still lives when many a mighty reputation has withered." 2.

Huneker, though he would not include himself among the great critics, confesses to his own "blind spots."

"I have with all my boasted cosmopolitanism many 'blind' spots, many little Dr. Fells, the reason why I cannot tell. It was with difficulty I read Arnold Bennett, notwithstanding the joy he gave me in Buried Alive, yet I couldn't swallow Old Wives' Tale--the hissing length of s's--nor that dull epic, Clayhanger. Mr. Bennett, whose touch is Gallic, who is first and last a newspaper man, is out of his depth in the artistic territory of Tolstoy and Hardy. He is not a literary artist like George Moore or John Galsworthy. But Mr. Bennett enthralled me with his The Pretty Lady, an evocation, artistically evoked. So thus I had to reverse a too hasty judgment upon Arnold Bennett, whose resources are evidently not exhausted." 3.

With but these few glimpses into Huneker's character, we can see that in his case the style or method is the man. It lends weight to Huneker's contention that the critic cannot be wholly objective, try as he may.

1. Steeplejack, Volume 2, Page 253
2. Bedouins, Page 122
3. Steeplejack, Volume 2, Page 126







## The Critic's Purpose and Method

What did Huneker consider the purpose of the critic? He tells us in a few places.

"It sounds magnanimous, but neither praise nor blame should be the goal of the critic. To spill his own soul, that should be his aim. Notwithstanding the talk about objective criticism, no such abstraction is thinkable. A critic relates his prejudices, nothing more. It is well to possess prejudices. They lend to life a meaning." 1.

Lest this sound too romantic for the burden of our thesis, let us read on:

"In his invaluable studies, Criticism and Standards, William Crary Brownell does not hold with the Brunetière nor with the Anatole France opposing schools of criticism. He detects the doctrinaire and pedagogue in Brunetière, and he rightly enough fears the tendency towards loose thinking in the camp of the impressionistic criticism, of which Anatole France is the recognized head. Mr. Brownell believes in central authority. Yet, he is not a pontiff. He allows the needful scope for a writer's individuality. It's all very well to describe the boating of your soul among the masterpieces if you possess a soul comparable to the soul of Anatole France, but yours may be a mean little soul dwelling up some back-alley, and your pen a lean, dull one. Will your critical adventures be worth relating? The epicurean test of the impressionist is not a standard, says Mr. Brownell, 'since what gives pleasure to some, gives none to others. And some standard is a necessary postulate, not only of criticism, but of all discussion, or even discourse.' He asserts that criticism is an art. 'One of Sainte-Beuve's studies is as definitely a portrait as one of Holbein's.' The 'creative-critic' of Wilde is hardly a reality. There are no super-critics. Only men, cultured and clairvoyant. Sainte-Beuve, Taine, Nietzsche, Arnold, Pater, Benedetto Croce, Georg Brandes--and this Dane is the most cosmopolitan of all--are thinkers and literary artists. It is perilously easy to imitate their mannerisms, as it is to parody the unpoetic parodies of Whitman, but it ends there. A little humility in a critic is a wise attitude. Humbly to follow and register his emotions aroused by the masterpiece is his function. There must be standards, but the two greatest are sympathy and its half-sister, sincerity. The schoolmaster rule of thumb is ridiculous; ridiculous, too, is any man setting







up an effigy of himself and boasting of his 'objectivity.' The happy mean between swashbuckling criticism and the pompous academic attitude, dull but dignified, seems difficult of attainment. But it exists. To use the personal pronoun in criticism doesn't always mean 'subjectivity.' I don't believe in schools, movements, or schematologies, or any one method of seeing and writing. Be charitable, be broad--in a word, be cosmopolitan. He is a hobby of mine, this citizen of the world. A novelist may be provincial, parochial as the town pump, that is his picture; but a critic must not be narrow in his outlook on the world. He need not be so catholic as to admire both Cezanne and Cabanel, for they are mutually exclusive, but he should be cosmopolitan in his sympathies, else his standards are insufficient. The truth is, criticism is a full-sized man's job." 1.

The critic is to educate himself and broaden his viewpoint and sympathies to the end that he may justly interpret and correctly appraise the work of art. The critic is human; he has his limitations, his prejudices, his preferences, of which he cannot rid himself but his knowledge and his outlook must be broad enough for him to render a correct estimate of the work considered. The critic cannot dispense with standards; the demands of excellence must be always before him. Sincerity and simplicity will help him toward an honest evaluation. Such a method was Huneker's practice as well as preachment.

#### No Identity Between Genius and Taste

There was no doubt in Huneker's mind concerning the non-identity of genius and taste:

"The critic need not be a painter to write of painting; a composer to speak of music. His primary appeal is to the public. He is the interpreter. The psychological processes need not concern us. There are the inevitable limitations. Describing music in terms of prose is hopeless. The only true criticism of music is the playing thereof. We are again confronted with the Vance Thompson crux: write about your liver, or the weather, or calico cats, as

1. Steeplejack, Volume 2, Page 122



up an effigy of himself and possessing of his 'objectivity'.  
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I am now doing. All the rest is technical camouflage. Of course, a catholic critic doesn't mean an unprejudiced one. A critic without prejudices would be a faultless monster, and like Aristides the Just, should be stoned." . . . . 1. "All said and done, a question of temperament, this opinion of one great man about the work of another.

"Therefore, brethren, it behooves us to be humble, as pride goeth before a fall. Like the industrious crow, the critic, or, as you will, the calico cat, should hop after the sowers of beauty, content to pick up in the furrowed field the grains dropped by genius. At best the critic sits down to a Barmecide's feast, to see, to smell, but not to taste the celestial manna vouchsafed by the gods. We are only contemporaries of genius, all of us, and the calico cat is the badge of our tribe. But who dares confess that shocking truth? And who shall bell the calico cat?" 2.

### No Connection Between Morality and Art

Neither was there any connection between morality and art. He never makes the mistake of the Puritan critics who preceded and followed him of judging a work of art in the light of the morals of the artist. Disapproval of the artist's way of life was no criterion for real appreciation of his work.

"I adored Poe, and sadly wonder over the certain condescension among our native critics when speaking of him. He drank. So did General Grant. He drugged. So did Coleridge, DeQuincey, and Charles Baudelaire. He was inconstant. So were Byron, Shelley, Swinburne--oh! billions of humans; what man some time or other hasn't carried a harem under his hat? Or dreamed of houris never seen on sea or land! But European poets could live recklessly while this unhappy American was hunted to his grave for his temperamental variations; and once buried was quickly exhumed by the moral buzzards. As Baudelaire, who gave Poe European fame by translating him, wrote: 'Since when are the jackals permitted to defile the graves of genius in the United States? Why don't critics and public alike pose the important question: Is the work good? Is the work bad? Do this and the moral will take care of itself--that misery-breeding moral, varying like a weather-vane according to clime, time, and circumstance.'" 3.

This matter of morality in the artist shows Huneker's power

1. Bedouins, Page 124
2. Ibid., Page 124
3. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 100



I am now doing. All the rest is technical camouflage. Of course, a technical critic doesn't mean an unprincipled one. A critic without principles would be a technical monster, and this Aristotle the poet, should be stored." . . . 1. "All said and done, a question of temperament, this opinion of the great man about the work of another. Therefore, preserved, it deserves us to be humble, as pride goes before a fall. Like the impostor's cry, the critic, or, as you will, the critic cat, should not enter the domain of beauty, content to pick up in the furrowed field the grains dropped by genius. At least the critic sits down to a Bergson's least, to see, to smell, but not to taste the celestial manna vouchsafed by the gods. We are only contemporaries of genius, all of us, and the critic cat is the badge of our tribe. But who cares for these last shaming truths? And who shall tell the critic cat?" 2.

## No Connection Between Morality and Art

Neither was there any connection between morality and art. It never makes the mistake of the further critics who proceeded and followed him in judging a work of art in the light of the morals of the artist. Disapproval of the artist's way of life was no criterion for real appreciation of his work.

"I admired Poe, and sadly wonder over the certain condemnation among our native critics when speaking of him. He drank. So did General Grant. He drank. So did Coleridge, Darwin, and Charles Baudelaire. He was inconstant. So were Byron, Shelley, Whitman--all pillars of humanism; what was some time of other man's carried a human name. His part? Or dreamed of morals never seen on sea or land! But European poets could live peacefully with this unhappy American was hunted to his grave for his temperamentally violent; and once hunted was quickly skinned by the moral humanists. As Baudelaire, who gave the European name by translating him, wrote: 'Since when was the Jackal permitted to defile the graves of artists in the United States? My dog's critics and public alike pass the important question: Is the work good? Is the work bad? Is this and the moral will take care of itself--that almost-breasting moral, varying like a weather-vane according to times, tides, and circumstances.'" 3.

This matter of morality in the artist shows Emerson's power



of dispassionate judgment; he neither approves nor condemns the artist's falls from grace. He tries to understand and, wherever possible, condones. Here, in his own particular way, he achieves a degree of objectivity not always reached by those who write objective criticism.

#### Contemporaries' Estimates of Huneker as a Critic

##### Confusion Regarding His Worth

Concerning Huneker's place in American criticism, the Current Opinion for April 1921 said:

"Seldom has so great a critic been subjected to such contradictory verdicts. Huneker, if we may judge from recent estimates on both sides of the Atlantic, was anything from a genius of the first order to a charlatan who pitifully wasted his gifts." 1.

The more one delves into the comparatively small literature about Huneker, the more one realizes that this is true. Where he is considered, there is either the hyperbole of praise or the inadequacy of underestimation. Huneker is either the inspired pathfinder of American culture or a glorified book reviewer. Some of this confusion regarding his critical importance is the result of lack of perspective. We are too close to Huneker's time and his work was too far in advance of his time for correct judgment by his contemporaries.

##### Estimates--Favorable and Unfavorable

Let us consider some of the divergent views concerning him to see if we can arrive at a general estimate of his worth to the field of literary criticism.

In the article cited, the opinion of several English

1. Current Opinion, April 1921, Placing James Huneker as a Critic

of disagreement; he neither approves nor condemns the critic's failure to reach a conclusion. He tries to understand and, wherever possible, condones. Here, in his own particular way, is a degree of objectivity not always reached by those who write objective criticism.

#### Conclusions Regarding His Work

Concerning Huxley's place in American criticism, the Current Opinion for April 1931 said:

"Huxley has so great a critic been subjected to such contradictory verdicts. Huxley, if we may judge from recent assessments on both sides of the Atlantic, was anything from a genius of the first order to a character who pitifully wasted his gifts."

The more one delves into the comparatively small literature about Huxley, the more one realizes that this is true. Where he is considered, there is either the hypothesis of praise or the insidiousness of understatement. Huxley is either the inspired pathfinder of American culture or a glorified book reviewer. Some of this confusion regarding his critical importance is the result of lack of perspective. We are too close to Huxley's time and his work was too far in advance of his time for correct judgment by his contemporaries.

#### Estimates--Favorable and Unfavorable

Let us consider some of the divergent views concerning him to see if we can arrive at a general estimate of his work to the field of literary criticism.

In the article cited, the opinion of several English



papers and periodicals--all in the negative as far as Huneker's critical judgment is concerned--is quoted. The writer of the article remarks that this lack of appreciation in England may be due to a large extent to Huneker's innate modesty and self-depreciation. His style was doubtless antipathetic to current English reviewing. One finds it hard to conceive of a more complete antithesis than that between Huneker's style and that of the average English review. Huneker couldn't have been ponderous if he had tried and there are no indications that he ever did.

Benjamin de Casseres in a review of Bedouins says: He [Huneker] has a marvelous power of suggesting, of stimulating, of suddenly embanking widely separated notions and as suddenly disassociating them. As some one said about him, his brilliancy and versatility hide his profundity.<sup>1</sup> In a publishers' note to Variations we find the following:

"Alone among American belletristic writers he [Huneker] followed the French journalistic literary tradition illumed and rendered illustrious by the practice of a long and shining roll of litterateurs. Such a practice tends of itself to popularize its product by inevitably keeping the larger public more or less in mind and therefore eschewing professional pedantries. The element of personality acquires prominence as in conversation. Style itself becomes conversational. Huneker is as familiar in address as if he were not erudite in material." 2.

Norman T. Byrne, writing in Scribner's of May 1922, seeks to find in Huneker's life physical and emotional foundation for some of his defects and virtues. He pursues his thesis too vigorously for the value of some of the resulting judgments.

1. Scribner's, May 1922
2. Variations (Publishers' note)

papers and periodicals--all in the negative as far as Huxley's critical judgment is concerned--is quoted. The writer of the article remarks that this lack of appreciation in England may be due to a large extent to Huxley's innate modesty and self-depreciation. His style was doubtless antipathetic to current English reviewing. One finds it hard to conceive of a more complete antithesis than that between Huxley's style and that of the average English review. Huxley couldn't have been popular even if he had tried and there are no indications that he ever did.

Benjamin de Casseres in a review of Huxley's says: He [Huxley] has a marvelous power of suggesting, of stimulating, or suddenly embodying widely separated notions and as suddenly disassociating them. He seems one said about him, his brilliant and versatility like his productivity." In a Englishman's

note to Verifications we find the following:

"Among among American belittled writers no [Huxley] followed the French journalistic literary tradition in form and rendered illustrations by the practice of a long and arduous roll of litterateurs. Such a practice tends of itself to popularize the product by inevitably keeping the largest public more or less in mind and therefore causing professional admiration. The element of personality acquires prominence as the conversation. Style itself becomes conversational. Huxley is as familiar in address as if he were not writing in marble." 2.

Norman L. Hays, writing in Scribner's of May 1922, seems to find in Huxley's life physical and emotional foundation for some of his defects and virtues. He pursues his thesis too vigorously for the value of some of the resulting judgments.



As an example of this tendency, he attributes to Huneker a devotion to Catholic ritual, aroused by what Burnes calls his "morbid" love of a pious mother, which makes Huneker incapable of making a correct judgment where an anti-Catholic is considered, and points to Huneker's articles on Oscar Wilde and James Joyce as indication of this. This is palpably false. Huneker was not over-devout himself and many of the people he praises most loudly were active enemies of the Church. Religion, no more than anything else, ever affected Huneker's judgment. Moreover, Huneker has plenty of ground for his dicta regarding Wilde and Joyce and they are not religious ones. If there is any critic to whom the quality of catholicity (small "c") could be ascribed, it is to Huneker. His charity of judgment amounts almost to a defect.

Mr. Byrne traces out Huneker's philosophy of life and says it "made for subjective valuation, leniency, a freshening zest for life that was pagan in spirit and a passionate love for art that was almost religious."<sup>1</sup> It also, according to Mr. Byrne, made for presentative, sketchy work which, though never dogmatic, was too humble and lacked general principles.

Mr. Byrne wisely remarks the French influence in Huneker and says:

"He had too vital an appreciation of the beautiful to follow Brunetière, but he was frightened by the freedom of the impressionistic methods of Anatole France."<sup>2</sup>

This does not sound like the mark of an utter impressionist.

Huneker, in Mr. Byrnes's estimation, had an unreasoning

1. James G. Huneker, by Norman T. Byrne, Scribner's, May 1922, Volume 71, Page 300
2. Ibid., Page 300

As an example of this tendency, he is attributed to Hume a devotion to Catholic ritual, exposed by what Hume calls his "worldly" love of a good mother, which makes Hume's incapacity of making a correct judgment where an anti-Catholic is concerned, and points to Hume's attitude on Oscar Wilde and James Joyce as indication of this. This is palpably false. Hume was not over-devout himself and many of the people he praised most highly were active enemies of the Church. Still, again, no more than anything else, ever affected Hume's judgment. Moreover, Hume has plenty of ground for his distaste for Garding Wilde and Joyce and they are not religious ones. If there is any critic to whom the quality of catholicity (small "c") could be ascribed, it is to Hume. His charity of judgment amounts almost to a defect.

Mr. Hume traces out Hume's philosophy of life and says it "made for subjective valuation, leniency, a freshening rest for life that was given in spirit and a passionate love for art that was almost religious." It also, according to Mr. Hume, made for presentative, exacting work which, though never dogmatic, was too humble and lacked general principles.

Mr. Hume wisely remarks the French influence in Hume and says:

"He had too vital an appreciation of the beautiful to follow Aristotle, but he was frightened by the freedom of the impressionistic methods of Aristotle's France." 2.

This does not sound like the mark of an utter impressionist. Hume, in Mr. Hume's estimation, had an unreasoning



respect for established authority, for venerable institutions, for time-worn reputations, "A thing that is also held in check by all the natural vitality and genius of the man."<sup>1</sup> This respect for authority accounts also for Huneker's touches of sentimentality. And yet, this man who was so tinged with reverence for things that are could be the chief welcomer of all new worthwhile things in the arts. A man who could combine these two points of view must necessarily be possessed of a broad judgment.

Mr. Byrne says that Huneker's main quality is "freshness." He is a gust of fresh air "that deranged the musty rooms of a criticism grown didactic and lifeless."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Bernard Smith has an interesting theory regarding Huneker's role in American criticism. He says the most significant and potent critical ideas of the twentieth century came from Huneker, Spingarn, and Van Wyck Brooks: Huneker brought in impressionism and Mencken; Spingarn, expressionism; and Van Wyck Brooks, a liberal's criticism of American society. Of the three, Brooks and Huneker are most important for they alone created schools and attracted foreigners and, of the two, Huneker has done most to affect American taste and criticism as Brooks's force has been spent in narrow range.

The reason for the emergence of these men Mr. Smith attributes to the rise of a new bourgeois class, founded upon industry, capitalism, international trade, a city, cosmopolitan class, as the United States began to change from a mercantile

1. Scribner's May 1922, Volume 71, Page 300

2. Ibid.

respect for established authority, for venerable institutions, for time-worn reputations, "a thing that is also held in check by all the natural vitality and genius of the man." This respect for authority becomes also for Hume's a source of sentimentality. And yet, this man who was so tinged with conservatism for things that are could be the chief welcomer of all new worthwhile things in the arts. A man who could combine these two points of view must necessarily be possessed of a broad judgment.

Mr. Hume says that Hume's main quality is "frankness." He is a host of fresh air "that dispelled the musty rooms of a critical grown dialectic and lifeless."

Mr. Bernard Smith has an interesting theory regarding Hume's role in American criticism. He says the most significant and potent critical ideas of the twentieth century came from Hume, Spenser, and Van Wyck Brooks. Hume brought in humanism and reason; Spenser, expressionism; and Van Wyck Brooks, a liberal's criticism of American society. Of the three, Brooks and Hume are most important for they alone created schools and attracted followers and, of the two, Hume has done most to affect American taste and criticism as Brooks's force has been spent in narrow range.

The reason for the emergence of these men Mr. Smith attributes to the rise of a new bourgeois class, founded upon industry, capitalism, international trade, a city, cosmopolitan class, as the United States began to change from a mercantile



pioneer community into an empire society. This class, Mr. Smith says, was subject to disillusioned, pragmatic, epicurean attitudes which characterize the modern spirit. Huneker, in Mr. Smith's opinion, was the complete expression of his age and that<sup>1.</sup> was the reason for his success.

"His cosmopolitanism, his sensuality, his indifference to the Puritan virtues, his contempt for Victorian esthetic, and his grim, inflexible individualism"<sup>2.</sup> mark him as the mouthpiece of this new society.

Mr. Smith says:

"He was always several steps ahead of the community that bred him, he was seldom in advance of, or superior to, its aspirations or even its latent reflexes. It was this class that came to dominate American life immediately after the World War. It set the whole tone of the decade in the arts and professions, in society, behavior, manners, and politics. And James Huneker's mind, his soul, if you will, was the dream of this class incarnate, and indeed it was his friends, his disciples, and pupils, who ruled the roost throughout the twenties. He is a shadow while his followers are canonized, yet it was he who did the spade-work and bequeathed the style and the point of view which were later made popular by a dozen journalists. 'He was a man,' said Van Wyck Brooks, 'of the tribe.' Therein, entirely, lies his importance."<sup>3.</sup>

It would amuse Huneker to be named the head of so vast a movement as a new class of society, him who disclaimed all schools and movements. Huneker stood for representative aesthetic values which are dateless and timeless. He was influenced by his time and place in history as any participating being is, but no critic has ever been more remote from the sentiments of the general public. He believed in the cult of the great man. Progress is in the advancement of the ideals of the

1. Man of the Tribe, by Bernard Smith, Saturday Review of Literature, August 19, 1933, Volume 10, Page 49

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.



greatest community into an organic society. This class, Mr. Smith says, was subject to disintegration, pressure, and economic stress. Under which characterizes the modern spirit. However, in Mr. Smith's opinion, was the complete expression of his age and that was the reason for his success.

"His cosmopolitanism, his sensitivity, his indifference to the human virtues, his contempt for Victorian aesthetic, and his grim, intellectual individualism" mark him as the representative of this new society.

Mr. Smith says:

"He was always several steps ahead of the community that bred him. He was seldom in advance of, or superior to, his aspirations or even his latent feelings. It was this class that came to dominate American life immediately after the world war. It set the whole tone of the decade in its style and professions, in society, behavior, manners, and politics. And James Huneker's mind, his soul, if you will, was the dream of this class incarnate, and indeed it was his friends, his disciples, and pupils, who ruled the roost throughout the twenties. He is a shadow while his followers are so glorified, yet it was he who did the spade-work and deepened the style and the point of view which were later made popular by a dozen journalists. 'He was a man,' said Van Wyck Brooks, 'of the tribe.' Therein, entirely, lies his importance."

It would seem, however, to be named the head of so vast a

movement as a new class of society, man who disclaimed all schools and movements. However good for representative aesthetic values which are timeless and timeless. He was influenced by his time and place in history as any participating being is, but no critic has ever been more remote from the sentiments of the general public. He believed in the cult of the great man. Progress is in the advancement of the ideals of the



exceptional individual, the man who cultivates his human capabilities to the highest possible development. Huneker was gregarious and friendly but no man was less of the "tribe." He flays its shortcomings too often. Mencken may be an outstanding representative of this allegedly new class in society but Huneker is not Mencken, in spite of their friendship and common qualities. As far as civilization went, Huneker was, least of all, an iconoclast. To a present-day reader he kowtows too much to established authority. That boyhood shyness and life-long gentleness of spirit are endearing qualities but they do not make a revolutionary personality.

Mr. Smith also says that Huneker is hard to read today. He says that Huneker had no depth, no substance, no wisdom; that he was not a real intellect. He was a pure impressionist, in other words. Huneker was never easy to read and his work is more or less dated. The world-at-large has caught up with him in some respects but a page of Huneker is still a good mental exercise as well as an enjoyable one. <sup>1.</sup>

His virtues, Mr. Smith sums up on two words, "sympathy" and "enthusiasm." These made for Huneker his success and also defects. Mr. Smith says that Huneker has seen good in inferior artists. Huneker would be the first to admit it. Mr. Smith remarks that Huneker has been wrong in certain judgments. Huneker was big enough not to think himself infallible. <sup>2.</sup>

The most unjust estimate of Huneker encountered is that in Fred Lewis Pattee's The New American Literature. Mr. Pattee

1. Man of the Tribe, by Bernard Smith, Saturday Review of Literature, August 19, 1933, Volume 10, Page 49
2. Ibid.

exceptional individual, the man who cultivates his human capacities to the highest possible development. "Hunger" was a serious and friendly but no less of the "tribe." He finds its shortcomings too often. "Hunger" may be an outstanding representative of this allegedly new class in society but "Hunger" is not "hunger," in spite of their initials and common qualities. As far as civilization went, "Hunger" was, least of all, an iconoclast. To a present-day reader he looks too much an established authority. That boyhood cynicism and lifelong gentleness of spirit are endearing qualities but they do not make a revolutionary personality.

Mr. Smith also says that "Hunger" is hard to read today. He says that "Hunger" had no depth, no substance, no wisdom; that he was not a real intellect. He was a good impressionist, in other words. "Hunger" was never easy to read and his work is more or less dated. The world-at-large has caught up with him in some respects but a page of "Hunger" is still a good mental exercise as well as an enjoyable one.

His virtues, Mr. Smith sums up in two words, "sympathy" and "realism." There was for "Hunger" his sadness and also his hope. Mr. Smith says that "Hunger" has been good in the past. "Hunger" would be the first to admit it. Mr. Smith remarks that "Hunger" has been wrong in certain judgments. "Hunger" was big enough not to think himself infallible.

The next highest estimate of "Hunger" encountered is that in Fred Lewis Pattee's The New American Literature. Mr. Pattee



gives Huneker credit for his anti-Puritanism, his versatility, his pioneer work in introducing European culture to America and for momentary flashes of real critical insight. One feels constantly that he is "playing down" Huneker's value and influence and that possibly it comes from the fact that Mr. Pattee overlooked Huneker completely in his History of American Literature.

"To the commonalty he was first known, as far as he was known, in 1917 through Mencken's essay, later published in his Book of Prefaces." 1.

One wonders where Mr. Pattee was when Huneker was doing his best work. Huneker was well known and appreciated, even before he was "discovered" by Mr. Mencken. It is possible to name many people less concerned with the progress of American literature than Mr. Pattee must have been who knew and admired Huneker years before 1917.

Mr. Pattee makes another assertion which is manifestly untrue.

"By temperament the man was headlong, impatient, a grasper at half-truths, a maker of epigrams at the expense of truth. His sarcasm was withering. His greatest pleasure was making 'imbeciles realize their imbecility' and by imbeciles he meant all not in step with his own little company." 2.

Enough has been said here in the evidence concerning Huneker's abnormal humility to show that this is a false statement. Huneker did dislike the pettiness and tawdriness of many of the mob's ideals but what he had to say of it was said with witty geniality, not sarcasm. He had a whimsical tolerance even toward the Philistine in the opinion of a writer in the Weekly

1. The New American Literature, Page 436
2. Ibid., Page 439

gives Hunter credit for his anti-Federalism, his versatility, his pioneer work in introducing European culture to America and for some of the most original insights. One feels constantly that he is "sifting down" Hunter's value and influence and that possibly it comes from the fact that Mr. Fettes never looked Hunter completely in his History of American Literature.

"To the community he was first known, as far as he was known, in 1819 through Rogers's essay, later published in his Book of Fables."

One wonders where Mr. Fettes was when Hunter was doing his best work. Hunter was well known and appreciated, even before he was "discovered" by Mr. Menck. It is possible to name many people less concerned with the progress of American literature than Mr. Fettes must have been who knew and admired Hunter years before 1819.

Mr. Fettes makes another assertion which is manifestly un-

"By temperament the man was hedonist, impatient, a grasping at half-truths, a maker of epigrams at the expense of truth. His career was otherwise. His greatest pleasure was making 'libelles' (satirical pamphlets) and by his libelles he meant all not in step with his own little con-

science has been said here in the evidence concerning Hunter's abnormal inability to show that this is a false statement. Hunter did dislike the pettiness and cowardliness of many of the mob's ideals but what he had to say of it was said with witty gentility, not sarcasm. He had a wholesale tolerance even toward the Philistines in the opinion of a writer in the Weekly



Review of February 23, 1921:

"Courtesy, almost deference was his habitual attitude toward conservative colleagues who challenged all his values." 1.

Mr. Pattee is disappointed in Steeplejack. Its failure to satisfy he assigns to Huneker's bohemianism. Steeplejack is disappointing as an autobiography, mainly because it doesn't tell us enough of Huneker. Some of the incidents are unimportant. Mencken says that the chapter concerning Theodore Roosevelt is "downright equivocation." 2. It is distinctly banal. One cannot imagine Huneker indulging in mob-worship of this kind. There is trivial gossip in Steeplejack but one does read and re-read it with delight and one comes away from it with a vivid realization of contact with a lovable personality and an exceptional one. When one realizes that this was written serially for The Philadelphia Public Ledger in fifteen weeks, one marvels all the more at its grace and charm. It couldn't have been Huneker's had it been heavy and dignified. Huneker calls it a "rag bag."

Huneker's work was "Moby-Dicks, chaotic, mostly trash," to Mr. Pattee. 3. This, concerning some of the most brilliant writing of the century, is hardly equitable criticism.

To Ludwig Lewisohn,

"the entire modern period of American culture is scarcely thinkable without the long, energetic and fruitful activity of James Huneker. 4. . . . if there had come by 1909 to exist an American minority that was aware of the direction of human culture, that group was largely the creation of James Huneker." 5.

1. Weekly Review, February 23, 1921, Huneker as a Critic, Vol. 4, Page 186
2. Prejudices, Third Series, by H. L. Mencken, Page 79
3. The New American Literature, by Fred Lewis Pattee, Page 440
4. Expression in America, by Ludwig Lewisohn, Page 350

"Conquest, almost defenseless was his traditional attitude toward conservative colleges and the challenged all his values."

Mr. Foster is disappointed in Stedman's. The failure to actually be assigned to Hunker's bookishness. Stedman's is disappointing as an autobiography, mainly because it doesn't tell us enough of Hunker. Some of the incidents are unimportant. Hunker says that the chapter concerning Theodore Roosevelt is "downright equivocation." It is distinctly banal. One cannot imagine Hunker indulging in self-worship of this kind. There is trivial gossip in Stedman's but one does read and re-read it with delight and one comes away from it with a vivid realization of contact with a lovely personality and an exceptional one. When one realizes that this was written actually for The Philadelphia Public Ledger in fifteen weeks, one marvels all the more at its grace and charm. It couldn't have been Hunker's had it been heavy and dignified. Hunker calls it a "tag end."

Hunker's work was "Moby-Dick, chaotic, mostly trash," to Mr. Foster. That, concerning some of the most brilliant writing of the century, is hardly epicritic criticism.

To James Hunker, "the entire modern period of American culture is scarcely thinkable without the long, energetic and fruitful activity of James Hunker. . . . It came into being by 1903 or 1904. . . . It is an American minority that was aware of the existence of human culture, that group was largely the creation of James Hunker."

1. Weekly Review, February 23, 1931, Hunker as a critic, vol. 4, p. 183.  
2. Stedman's, third series, by H. L. Hunker, page 73.  
3. The New American Literature, by Fred Lewis Pattee, page 400.  
4. Expression in America, by Henry Lewisohn, page 250.



Yet Lewisohn sees Huneker as a pure impressionist.

"He was the pure impressionist. But that is what America needed. For nearly all critics but himself cut themselves off from the majority of artistic impacts by anterior principles worthy of the W. C. T. U. But his sensibility was first-rate in quality, for it embraced all the arts and it was united to a taste that was almost unerring. . . . Not that Huneker had not, when he chose, an intellectual relation to his idols. 'Nietzsche, it should be remembered, was a great psychologist, perhaps greater as such than as a formulator of a philosophical system.' But Huneker did not choose very often to use his mind. Driven constantly to write for bread, it was easier to be gossipy, allusive, splenetic, to make anecdote and enthusiasm do for substance. . . . An austerer and more scrupulous spirit would not so successfully have carried the war of modernity into all the rotting citadels of genteel criticism and Anti-Saloon League taste in letters." 1.

H. W. Boynton laments Huneker's preoccupation with matters of the stomach and his bohemianism but gives him credit for his versatility, his critical ability, his vitality, and human qualities.

"He was versatile with the uncalculating enthusiasm of a boy who will turn from one hilltop to another with complete disregard of all the hard climbing it involves. It's the fresh view he was after. . . . All the work in the world won't produce versatility and I'm sorry to add that versatility too often spells superficiality." 2.

"He never praised his own work, but he enjoyed the praise of others. He was inclined to undervalue himself." 3.

"He is an eager lover of the things that are more excellent versatile all the time, but some of the time an exact and exhaustive student; an overflowing spring of generous impulses, a sensitive and abiding friend, and a loyal lover. It must have been fun to know him." 4.

There are more enthusiastic judgments concerning Huneker's critical contribution: Benjamin de Casseres, one of his friends, tells us,

"His birth was as much an event in America as the birth of

1. Expression in America, by Ludwig Lewisohn, Page 354
2. Some Contemporary Americans, by H. W. Boynton, Page 226
3. Ibid., Page 229
4. Ibid., Page 229







Walt Whitman and Edgar Allen Poe." 1.

As early as July 1909, a writer in Current Literature acclaimed Huneker as the Brandes of American literature and said his position was all the more outstanding because there were so few critics of worth in America.

"We can easily count our critics on our fingers; and unless we are arrantly optimistic in our own interpretation of the critic we need no more than a single hand. On the hand of criticism, Mr. Pollard, himself, (Percival) at his best may be compared to the little finger, Mr. Paul E. More, eminently sane and respectable, to the thumb, but James Huneker is the forefinger pointing the way to the new." 2.

The New Republic, shortly after Huneker's death, honestly estimated his qualities:

"It is no part of the standing quarrel between the field forces of criticism and its general staff to say that Huneker was naturally enlisted in active service. This was due in some measure to the exigencies of place and time. His America could not possibly accomodate within its narrow working ideas the multifold artistic Europe of which he had such fresh and special tidings. He was condemned to devote himself to the more immediate forms of interpretation. To such interpretation he gave himself without reserve or stint. It was really a journalistic task undertaken with unselfishness and it was overlit with new names and references." 3.

"He worked with good heart and true intuition. Not following others' footsteps, as is the common fault of the authoritarians, he has proved to be the forerunner of the age that is now flourishing, with the heroes of this age the men whom he discerned and proclaimed on his own responsibility, in a manner which was equally spirited." 4.

The New Republic does not want us to classify Huneker with others of the critical profession, maintaining that Huneker was in a class by himself.

"He was a Dionysiac force in criticism, gay and warm, as well as sharp and spiced and stinging. His relish for life and literature, his torrent of allusion and enumeration

1. Current Opinion, April 1921, Placing Huneker as a Critic, Volume 70, Page 534
2. Current Literature, July 1909, James Huneker, Super-Critic, Volume 47, Page 57
3. New Republic, February 23, 1921, Vol 25, P. 357 /4. Ibid.



Walt Whitman and Edgar Allan Poe.

As early as July 1903, a writer in Current Literature ac-  
claimed Whitman as the founder of American literature and said  
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"We can easily count our critics on our fingers; and unless  
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"He was a distinguished force in criticism, gay and witty, as  
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1. Current Opinion, April 1901, placing Hanner as a critic.  
Volume 70, Page 534
2. Current Literature, July 1903, James Hanner, Super-Critic.  
Volume 47, Page 57
3. New Republic, February 23, 1901, Vol 23, No 14, Page 14.



should keep him from the pigeon-hole of classification. He was a creator who loved every variety of artistic creativeness, and gave this country an unexampled report of it. To lose him is to lose a true watcher of the skies." 1.

According to the Literary Digest of March 5, 1921, conservatives and radicals in literature acclaimed him at his death. It stated that no specialist in any one of the arts could impeach Huneker's judgment in the whole gamut of them. It quoted Ex-Attorney-General George W. Wickersham, a boyhood friend of Huneker, as saying at his funeral regarding the earnestness of Huneker's criticism:

"He judged all that was produced in any domain of art by comparison with absolute standards. His condemnation was not a matter of feeling or prejudice. It was the inevitable result of contrast. He could be witty without being cruel. It was this rare quality of impersonal judgment which singles him out as unique among critics. He had a great human tolerance for the failures of any man or woman whom he saw struggling to give the world what he perceived of truth or beauty in created things. He had no tolerance for affectation. He was inexorable in the application of standards of art." 2.

The Living Age of May 14, 1921 quoted an article by Thomas Moulton which appeared in The English Review of April of that year.

"Huneker's relish for life and literature showed qualities of which there is no equivalent in England. 'A Dionysiac force in criticism' he has been well called, apart as the poles from our own litterateurs, writing their criticism sadly, our zestless authoritarians." 3.

In Mr. Moulton's opinion, Huneker had a rich and ripe knowledge and no suggestion of writing down to his public. The following is interesting for its reference to Huneker's allusiveness:

"He explored Europe and returned to New York with fresh tidings and generally sound pronouncements. He loved to

1. New Republic, February 23, 1921, Volume 25, Page 357
2. Literary Digest, March 5, 1921, Volume 68, Page 28
3. The Living Age, May 14, 1921, Volume 309, Page 426



should keep him from the highest-hole of classification. He was a person who loved every variety of artistic expression, and gave this country an unexampled report of it. To lose him is to lose a true westerner of the class."

According to the Literary Digest of March 6, 1921, con-

servatives and radicals in literature admired him as his coach. It stated that no specialist in any one of the arts could surpass Munster's judgment in the whole range of them. It quoted

an attorney-general George W. Wickham, a personal friend of Munster, as saying of his funeral regarding the earnestness of

Munster's criticism:

"He judged all that was produced in any domain of art by comparison with absolute standards. His consideration was not a matter of feeling or prejudice. It was the inevitable result of contrast. He could be witty without being cruel. It was this rare quality of impersonal judgment which singled him out as unique among critics. He had a great human tolerance for the failures of any man or woman whom he saw struggling to give the world what he perceived of truth or beauty in created things. He had no tolerance for affectation. He was inexorable in the application of standards of art."

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"Munster's relish for life and literature showed qualities of which there is no equivalent in England. 'A Gypsy's Force in Criticism' he has been well called, apart as the poles from our own literature, writing clear criticism and our readers' authorities."

In Mr. Moulton's opinion, Munster had a rich and ripe knowledge and no suggestion of writing down to his public. This following is interesting for its reference to Munster's influence:

ness:

"He explored Europe and returned to New York with French citations and generally sound pronouncements. He loved to

1. New Republic, February 23, 1921, Volume 25, page 357
2. Literary Digest, March 6, 1921, Volume 28, page 28
3. The Living Age, May 14, 1921, Volume 209, page 428



docket his artistic heroes as madmen, wits, saints and sinners, and he captured their splendor, their pathos, and their gaiety for his readers in a way that has no comparison in critical ready-writing. He reveled in allusiveness, confirming one of his author's statements by the words of ten others, checking an English painting by an Italian master, until the reader's mind is as heavily freighted as a catalogue. On one page of his Ivory Apes and Peacocks there may be counted thirty-three references!" 1.

Mr. Moulton, too, says that Huneker's later books were not the equals of the first.

Lawrence Gilman, a friend, writing in the North American of April 1921 said:

"Mr. Huneker in a quite definite and literal sense began and ended a significant period in the aesthetic life of this country. He had scarcely a precursor; he was unique while he lived; and he has no successor." 2.

Mr. Gilman is well aware of the significance of Huneker's contribution to American letters:

"While Hamilton Wright Mabie and his confrères were earnestly lecturing and essaying upon Thackeray and Dickens, trying to estimate, a little uncertainly, George Meredith and relapsing upon James Lane Allen with obvious relief, while their musical and pictorial brothers of the critical craft were engrossed in Brahms and Tchaikovsky, Pinero and Clyde Fitch, Sargent and Abbey, Mr. Huneker gaily conducted to public pasture (as he once put it) a surprising 'flock of Unicorns'--typifying the dreamers of dreams in the Seven Arts." 3.

"To a public culture which had been timorous and parochial, a civilization which had been drab, anaemic, and thin, Mr. Huneker, almost unaided, brought color and gaiety and abundance. . . . Into the depressing drabness of our critical writing, with its incomparable paltriness and sterility, its dullness and triteness, its traditionalism and vapidness, Mr. Huneker entered with somewhat the effect of a gusty spring wind blowing through a long-closed Mid-Western parlor." 4.

It is Mr. Gilman's belief that Huneker had completed his work before he died; that his pioneering was done and that his

1. The Living Age., May 14, 1921, Volume 309, Page 426
2. The North American, April 1921, Volume 243, Page 556
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.



booked his specific heroes as madmen, with, saints and sin-  
ners, and he seemed to be glorifying, their, actions, and  
their, ability for his readers in a way that was no longer  
and in critical reading-writing. He revealed in all his  
conflicting one of his author's attitudes by the words of  
the passage, showing an English attitude by an Italian  
writer, until the reader's mind is as heavily freighted as  
a cargo ship. On one page of his Everyman and his  
there may be counted thirty-three references.

Mr. Wolfe, too, says that Munster's later books were not

the equals of the first.

Lawrence Gilman, a friend, writing in the North American of

April 1931 said:

"Mr. Munster in a quiet definite and liberal sense began  
and ended a significant period in the aesthetic life of  
this country. He had scarcely a precursor; he was unique  
while he lived; and he has no successor." 3.

Mr. Gilman is well aware of the significance of Munster's

contribution to American letters:

"While Munster wrote and his countrymen were earnest-  
ly listening and assenting upon Emerson and Whitman, try-  
ing to understand, a little uneasily, George Washington and  
relating upon James Lane Allen with obvious relief, while  
their method and classical structure of the British craft  
were suggested in drama and Tolstoy's, Flaubert and Dostoevsky  
fiction, Gogol and Akshay, Mr. Munster early connected to  
public gesture (as he once put it) a surprising 'flick of  
the hand'--typifying the dreamers of dreams in the seven  
arts." 3.

"To a public culture which had been timorous and paralytic,  
a civilization which had been dead, anemic, and cold, Mr.  
Munster, almost unaided, brought color and gaiety and  
humanity. . . . Into the dreary brightness of our arti-  
ficial world, with its innumerable palaces and stateli-  
ness, its richness and richness, its traditionalism and  
variety, Mr. Munster entered with somewhat the effect of  
a gusty spring wind blowing through a long-closed Mid-  
western cellar." 4.

It is Mr. Gilman's belief that Munster had completed his

work before he died; that his pioneering was done and that his



writing had begun to wear thin. Huneker was a stylist and had the gift of summing up an era or a writer in a succinct and revealing phrase which remains with the reader as a key to the age or individual described. When he had done so, if the phrase pleased him, he was likely to repeat it. Huneker tells us in Steeplejack that at one time he was at "the hypercritical age, believing that no phrase should be repeated, an insane notion that often afflicts 'stylists.'" <sup>1.</sup> Later such repetition did not trouble him and there are many instances of it. Of this tendency Mr. Gilman says:

"It was always a defect in his style that he fell in love with certain epithets, and that these hypnotized him, dogged his footsteps in his prose, tending to make it seem artificial and self-conscious." <sup>2.</sup>

To Mr. Gilman the later books are inferior to the earlier and include banalities which the earlier Huneker would have suppressed. With the exception of Unicorns, I think this is true. The essays seem more trivial, more journalistic, the good Huneker bits are farther apart.

It is a matter of regret to Mr. Gilman that Huneker did not care to "attempt any orientation of artistic phenomena in the social scheme," <sup>3.</sup> to reduce his judgments to the terms of general ideas. Mr. Gilman ascribes this failure to Huneker's aversion to interpreting literature in the light of moral and philosophical codes.

"No doubt he failed to discriminate between the criticism that is enriched by an acute awareness of all the interacting forces of its social setting and the incurable American habit of discussing aesthetic phenomena in terms

1. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 137

2. The North American, April, 1921, Volume 243, Page 556.

3. Ibid.

writing has begun to wear thin. Huxley was a stylist and had the gift of turning up an eye or a writer in a special and revealing phrase which remains with the reader as a key to the style of individual described. When he had done so, if the phrase pleased him, he was likely to repeat it. Huxley calls us to remember that at one time he was at "the hypercritical age," believing that no phrase should be repeated, an intense notion that often affects "stylists." Later such repetition did not trouble him and there are many instances of it. Of this

condemns Mr. Gilman says:

"It was always a defect in his style that he fell in love with certain phrases, and that these annoyed him, though his footings in his prose, tending to make it seem artificial and self-conscious." 2.

To Mr. Gilman the latter books are inferior to the earlier and include passages which the earlier Huxley would have disapproved. With the exception of Unconquered, I think this is true. The essays seem more trivial, more journalistic, the good ones are fewer and farther apart.

It is a matter of regret to Mr. Gilman that Huxley did not write to "accept any orientation of artistic phenomena in the social scheme," to reduce his judgments to the terms of general theory. Mr. Gilman expresses this failure to achieve a synthesis to interpreting literature in the light of moral and psychological values.

"No doubt he failed to discriminate between the criticism that is animated by an acute awareness of all the inner-acting forces of its social setting and the insensitive American habit of discussing aesthetic phenomena in terms

1. Unconquered, Volume I, Page 137
2. The North American, April, 1931, Volume 215, Page 558
3. Ibid.



of rigid and sentimental piety. . . . But he need not have detached himself so wholly from the deeper and wider implications of his subject matter." 1.

This is Huneker's main defect in Mr. Gilman's eyes for he goes on to say:

"Yet, when all is said, how immeasurably valuable an influence he was! What susceptibility, clairvoyance, immediacy of response were his. He was innocent of prepossessions, infinitely flexible and generous. He was the friend of any talent fine and strange and courageous enough to incur the dislike of the might army of Bourbons, Puritans, and Boeotians. His critical tact was almost infallible. . . . He has written pages that will always be cherished by those for whom criticism is one of the several ways of literature --pages of superb and gorgeous imagination, of beautiful insight, of splendid valor. He was, as we have already said of him, both vivid and acute, robust and fine-fingered, tolerant yet unyielding, astringent, yet tender--dynamic, contagious, perpetually lovable, inveterately alive. Remembering him one remembers, too, one of his favorite quotations from Nietzsche: 'Convictions are prisons. . . . New ears for new music. . . . New eyes for the most remote things.'" 2.

Mencken possesses Huneker's gift of characterizing a writer or movement with an illuminating phrase, although Huneker's was more apt to represent a wider judgment. Mencken has written of Huneker with appreciation and insight. He gives us many personal glimpses of Huneker, a thing which is difficult to find in the case of a man who kept out of the limelight. He calls Huneker

"the solitary Iokanaan in this tragic aesthetic wilderness, the only critic among us whose vision sweeps the whole field of beauty, and whose reports of what he sees there show any genuine gusto. That gusto of his, I fancy, is two-thirds of his story. It is unquenchable, contagious, inflammatory; he is the only performer in the commissioned troupe who knows how to arouse his audience to anything approaching enthusiasm." 3.

1. The North American, April, 1921, Volume 243, Page 556
2. Ibid.
3. A Book of Prefaces, by H. L. Mencken, Page 159



of right and sentimental prey. . . . but he need not have  
described himself as wholly free from the deeper and wider im-  
plications of his subject matter." 1.

This is Hawthorne's own words in Mr. Oliver's eyes for he

does not say:

"Yes, when all is said, now immeasurably valuable in influ-  
ence as was! What responsibility, what responsibility, immediately  
of various words are. He was himself of the deepest of the  
infinitely flexible and generous. He was the friend of every  
valiant line and the courage enough to hunt the  
outline of the great army of the world, Puritans, and  
Hawthorne. The critical test was almost insurmountable. . . .  
He was a writer who will always be regarded by those  
for whom criticism is one of the several ways of literature  
--pages of superb and gorgeous imagination, of beautiful  
insight, of splendid vision. He was, as we have already  
said of him, both vivid and acute, robust and fine-lined,  
bold and yet unshrinking, original, yet tender--tender,  
conscious, yet passionately lovely, passionately alive. He  
was a man who was a man, too, one of his favorite dis-  
tinctions from Hawthorne: 'Hawthorne is a man. . . .  
He was for new music. . . . New eyes for the most remote  
things.' 2.

Hawthorne possesses Hawthorne's gift of understanding a writer  
or movement with an illuminating phrase, although Hawthorne's was  
more apt to represent a wider judgment. Hawthorne has written of  
Hawthorne with appreciation and insight. He gives us many reasons  
of richness of Hawthorne, a thing which is difficult to find in  
the case of a man who kept out of the limelight. He calls him-

"the solitary looker-on in this tragic realistic wilderness,  
the only critic among us whose vision sweeps the whole  
field of beauty, and whose reports of what he sees there  
show any genuine gusto. That gusto of his, I fancy, is  
two-thirds of his story. It is indispensable, essential,  
indispensable; he is the only person in the community  
who knows how to arouse his audience to anything ap-  
proaching enthusiasm." 3.



This joy in life is remarked by all the commentators as it must by even the most casual reader of Huneker. To this quality Mencken attributes Huneker's excellence in presentation over the other American critics. Huneker had the incomparable advantage of personal charm. Mencken says that Huneker's two studies on Ibsen, contrasted with the general body of writing upon Ibsen, represent the difference "between a portrait and a Bertillon 1. photograph, Richard Strauss and Czerny, a wedding and an autopsy." The superiority of Huneker's treatment comes also from the fact that he was a real man of culture, not the ordinary half-informed critic. Mencken says:

"He has reported more of interest and value than any other American critic, living or dead, but the essence of his criticism does not lie so much in what he specifically reports as in the civilized point of view from which he reports it. He is a true cosmopolitan, not only in the actual range of his adventurings, but also and more especially in his attitude of mind. His world is not America, nor Europe, nor Christendom, but the whole universe of beauty." 2.

Mencken gives him credit for altering the outlook of American literature and criticism.

"He was, I believe, the first American (not forgetting William Morton Payne and Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, the pioneers) to write about Ibsen with any understanding of the artist behind the prophet's mask; he was the first to see the rising star of Nietzsche (this was back in 1888); he was beating a drum for Shaw the critic before ever Shaw the dramatist and mob philosopher was born (circa 1886-1890); he was writing about Hauptmann and Maeterlinck before they had got well set on their legs in their own countries; his estimate of Sudermann, bearing date of 1905, may stand with scarcely the change of a word today; he did a lot of valiant pioneering for Strindberg, Hervieu, Stirner and Gorki, and later on helped in the pioneering for Conrad; he was in the van of the MacDowell enthusiasts; he fought for the ideas of such painters as Davies, Lawson, Luks, Sloan and

1. A Book of Prefaces, by H. L. Mencken, Page 160
2. Ibid., Page 161
3. Ibid., Page 162



This joy in life is reflected by all the circumstances as it  
 that he even the most casual reader of his work. To this quality  
 of his work, however, is a reflection in his presentation over the  
 other American critics. However, and the responsible advantage  
 of personal charm. However, says that however, the attitude on  
 them, contrasted with the general body of writing upon them,  
 however, and therefore "between a portrait and a description."  
 However, however, and Gervais, a wedding and an analysis  
 the superiority of Emerson's treatment comes also from the fact  
 that he was a real man of culture, not the ordinary half-in-

formed critic. However says:

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"He was, I believe, the first American (not forgetting  
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 tempts) to write about Emerson with any understanding of the  
 artist behind the prophet's mask; he was the first to see  
 the living man of Emerson (this was done in 1880); he  
 was the first to show the critic before ever saw the  
 dramatist and not philosopher was born (1888-1890);  
 he was writing about Hawthorne and Melville before they  
 had got well set on their legs in their own country; his  
 estimate of Emerson, bearing date of 1890, was ahead with  
 scarcely the change of a word today; he did a lot of val-  
 uable pioneering for Emerson, Gervais, Blitzer and Gervais,  
 and later on helped in the pioneering for Gervais; he was in  
 the van of the Hawthorne and Melville; he fought for the  
 ideas of such painters as Melville, Emerson, Gervais, Blitzer and



Prendergest (Americans all, by the way: an answer to the hollow charge of exotic obsession) at a time when even Manet, Monet and Degas were laughed at; he was among the first to give a hand to Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Stephen Crane and H. B. Fuller. In sum, he gave some semblance of reality in the United States, after other men had tried and failed, to that great but ill-starred revolt against Victorian pedantry, formalism and sentimentality which began in the early 90's. It would be difficult, indeed, to overestimate the practical value to all the arts in America of his intellectual alertness, his catholic hospitality to ideas, his artistic courage, and, above all, his powers of persuasion. It was not alone that he saw clearly what was sound and significant; it was that he managed, by the sheer charm of his writings, to make a few others see and understand it. If the United States is in any sort of contact today, however remotely, with what is aesthetically going on in the more civilized countries--if the Puritan tradition, for all its firm entrenchment, has eager and resourceful enemies besetting it--if the pall of Harvard quasi-culture, by the Oxford manner out of Calvinism, has been lifted ever so little--there is surely no man who can claim a larger share of credit for preparing the way." 1

More to the same effect--

"While the college pedagogues of the Brander Matthews type still worshipped the dead bones of Scribe and Sardou, Robertson and Bulwer-Lytton, he preached the new and revolutionary gospel of Ibsen. In the golden age of Rosa Bonheur's 'The Horse Fair,' he was expounding the principles of the post-impressionists. In the midst of the Sousa marches he whooped for Richard Strauss. Before the rev. professors had come to Schopenhauer, or even to Spencer, he was hauling ashore the devil-fish, Nietzsche. No stranger poisons have ever passed through the customs than those he brought in his baggage. No man among us has ever urged more ardently, or with sounder knowledge or greater persuasiveness, that catholicity of taste and sympathy which stands in such direct opposition to the booming certainty and snarling narrowness of Little Bethel." 2.

Mencken says that Huneker knew as much as forty men

"and his knowledge was well-ordered and instantly available. He had read everything and seen everything and nothing that he had ever read or seen or heard quite passed out of his mind." 3.

1. A Book of Prefaces, by H. L. Mencken, Page 162
2. Ibid., Page 192
3. Prejudices: Third Series, by H. L. Mencken, Page 82



Frederick (American) all, by the way: an answer to the  
Hollow charge of exotic obscurity at a time when even  
Lans, Wood and books were in fashion; he was among the  
first to give a hand to French writers, Theodore Dreiser,  
Stephen Crane and C. B. Gilman. In 1900, he gave some  
evidence of reality in the United States, after other men had  
tried and failed, to that great but ill-served revolt  
against Victorian pedantry, formalism and sentimentalism  
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others see and understand it. If the United States is in  
any sort of contact today, however remote, with what is  
essentially good in the more civilized countries--if  
the human tradition, for all its limitations, has  
sagor and resolutely ennobled the best of the  
Harvard practical culture, by the Oxford manner and of Calvin-  
ism, has been lifted ever so little--there is surely no man  
who can claim a larger share of credit for preparing the  
way."

more to the same effect--

"While the college pedagogues of the Brandeis-Hartman type  
still worshipped the dead bones of Aristotle and Aristotle, he  
Dreiser and Oliver Wyton, he presented the new and revolu-  
tionary gospel of ideas. In the golden age of those days  
Dreiser's 'The House of Pain' was expounding the principles  
of the post-impersonalism. In the midst of the '90's  
he was the champion for Richard Strauss. Before the war,  
professors had come to Schopenhauer, or even to Spencer,  
he was denouncing Schopenhauer the devil-fish, Nietzsche. No  
stranger persons have ever passed through the customs than  
those he brought in his baggage. No man among us has ever  
lived more radically, or with broader knowledge or greater  
generousness, that catholicity of taste and sympathy  
which stands in such direct opposition to the booming nar-  
rowness and snarling narrowness of little circles."

Heckman says that Emerson knew as much as forty men

"and his knowledge was well-ordered and instantly avail-  
able. He had read everything and seen everything and  
nothing that he had ever read or seen or heard quite passed  
out of his mind."



To Mencken, Huneker was a stimulating companion, good-humored and witty, and an enthralling conversationalist. Words and phrases fell from him with startling rapidity and all were worth remembering. Mencken says that Huneker's style in his books could not help being allusive as his talk was ten times more allusive than his writing.

Old Foggy and the one novel, Painted Veils, represent the real Huneker more than any other of the books, in Mencken's belief. He maintains that Huneker lost something of spontaneity in his books; that in his newspaper writing there was a freer and more characteristic expression of the man. Huneker seemed to feel a restraint in his formal writing that he did not feel in his daily newspaper feats.

Mencken does not miss Huneker's faults and points of defect. To him, Huneker has no capacity for extra-aesthetic valuations.

"If a work of art that stood before him was honest, if it was original, if it was beautiful and thoroughly alive, then he was for it to his last corpuscle." 1.

This led him, according to Mencken, to espouse persons who were unworthy, "the sort of revolutionary who is here today and gone tomorrow" 2. and to neglect the new men who were more drab in appearance. He praised some frauds and overlooked some good people in Mencken's judgment but, in general, Mencken says one is amazed by the soundness of Huneker's judgments.

"He discerned the new and the important long before most of his contemporaries discerned it, and he described it habitually in terms that were never bettered afterwards." 3.

"His successive heroes, always under fire when he first

1. Prejudices: Third Series, by H. L. Mencken, Page 72

2. Ibid., Page 74

3. Ibid., Page 75

To Menckes, Hanneke was a stimulating companion, good-  
humored and witty, and an extraordinary conversationalist. Words  
and phrases fell from his lips with startling rapidity and all were  
worth remembering. Menckes says that Hanneke's style in his  
books could not help being elusive as his talk was so often  
more elusive than his writing.

His easy and the one novel, Palated Velle, represents the

real Hanneke more than any other of his books, in Menckes's be-  
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Menckes does not miss Hanneke's facile and points of detail.  
To him, Hanneke has no capacity for artistic aesthetic valuation.  
"If a work of art that stood before him was honest, it is  
was original. It was beautiful and thoroughly alive,  
then he was for it to his last convulsion."

This led him, according to Menckes, to espouse persons who were  
known, "the sort of revolutionaries who is here today and gone  
tomorrow" and to neglect the new men who were fresh in ap-  
pearance. He praised some French and overlooked some good Ger-  
mans in Hanneke's judgment but, in general, Menckes says one is  
amused by the soundness of Hanneke's judgments.

"He discarded the new and the important long before most of  
his contemporaries discarded it, and he described it habit-  
ually in terms that were never bettered afterwards."

"His successive careers, always under fire when he first



championed the, almost invariably moved to secure ground and became solid men, challenged by no one save fools--Ibsen, Nietzsche, Brahms, Strauss, Cezanne, Stirner, Synge, the Russian Composers, the Russian novelists. He did for this Western world what Georg Brandes was doing for Continental Europe--sorting out the new comers with sharp eyes, and giving mighty lifts to those who deserved it." 1.

Most of Huneker's defects, Mencken feels, came from his virtues, his extreme modesty. Mencken realizes that Huneker was not much of a fighter. He says:

"And though he was the greatest of all the enemies that the guardians had to face, it was seldom that he tackled them directly. . . . He was always loath to set himself directly against a concrete champion of orthodoxy; he could never get quite over the feeling that he was no more than an amateur among such gaudy doctors and that it would be unseemly for him to flout them too openly." 2.

Mencken accounts for this timorousness by Huneker's intense gregariousness and the fact that for long years Huneker was fighting alone, putting forward these new gods with no sustaining congregation. The reason probably lies deeper than these facts. He was shy as a boy and gentle in his relationships with others all his life. We have remarked his inability to hate anything except hypocrisy and noise. He never lambasted his opponents, believing that they had a right to their opinions even as he. Mencken says that Steeplejack is full of apologetic timidity.

"It is the biography of a man who came to the end of his life harboring doubts of his own chief accomplishments and a bit intimidated by his own fame." 3.

Mencken is authority for the statement that it embarrassed Huneker to have his superiority to the rest of the critics discussed. Huneker felt he had spread himself too thinly over the

1. Prejudices: Third Series, by H. L. Mencken, Page 75
2. Century, June, 1921, James Huneker, by H. L. Mencken, Vol. 102, Page 191
3. Ibid., Page 191

comprehended this, almost invariably moved to secure ground  
and became solid men, challenged by no one save foot-  
men, Russians, Germans, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians,  
the Russian Cossacks, the Russian Cossacks. At the  
this masterly world what Georg Brandes was saying to  
himself was--saying out the new names of the  
literary world to those who deserved it.

Most of Brandes's disciples, however, came from his  
virtues, his extreme modesty. When he realized that Brandes was  
not much of a fighter, he says:

"And though he was the greatest of all the writers of the  
Scandinavian age, it was seldom that he reached them  
directly. . . . He was always loath to set himself  
against a stronger opinion of others; he would never  
get quite over the feeling that he was no more than an  
earn among such ready leaders and that it would be unwise  
to let him to fight them too openly." 2.

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tistic timidity.

"It is the biography of a man who came to the end of his  
life as a young doctor of his own great responsibilities  
and a bit frightened by his own fears." 3.

Brandes is authority for the statement that it embarrassed  
himself to have his superiority to the rest of the critics dis-  
closed. Brandes felt he had spread himself too widely over the

1. Preface: Third Series, by E. E. Schenck, page 75  
2. Gustav, June, 1921, James Munroe, by E. E. Schenck, Vol.  
107, page 101  
3. Ibid., page 101



arts and did not know so much as the supposed experts in the separate fields of art.

Mencken blames this same timidity for Huneker's acceptance of membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Mencken affirms that:

"The offer of it to a man of his age and attainments after he had been passed over year after year in favor of all sorts of cheap-jack novelists and tenth-rate compilers of college textbooks, was intrinsically insulting; it was almost as if the Musical Union had offered to admit a Brahms." 1.

Just the fact that it might have been discourteous or insulting for Huneker to refuse the membership might have influenced him to accept it. He seems constitutionally unable to hurt anybody's feelings, even an organization's.

Mencken, too, noted a diminution in intensity and idea in the later books of Huneker, a tendency to conform to current estimations.

"He praises such one-day masterpieces as McFee's 'Casuals of the Sea'; he is polite to the gaudy heroines of the opera-house; he gags a bit at Wright's 'Modern Painting'; he actually makes a gingery curtsy to Frank Jewett Mather, a Princeton professor. . . . The pressure in the gauges can't keep up to 250 pounds forever. Man must tire of fighting after a while, and seek ease in his inn." 2.

Yet none of Huneker's faults could blind Mencken to his great influence in American literature.

"Into an assembly of national critics who had long wallowed in dogmatic puerilities, Huneker entered with a taste infinitely surer and more civilized, a learning infinitely greater, and an address infinitely more engaging. No man was less the reformer by inclination, and yet he became a reformer beyond compare. He emancipated criticism in America from its old slavery to stupidity, and with it he emancipated all the arts themselves." 3.

1. Prejudices: Third Series, by H. L. Mencken, Page 81
2. A Book of Prefaces, by H. L. Mencken, Page 183
3. Prejudices: Third Series, by H. L. Mencken, Page 83

arts and did not know so much as the supposed experts in the

separate fields of art.

It was clear that this was a study for Hume's acceptance

of membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Hume's letter was:

"The offer of it to a man of his age and attainments is a  
he had been passed over year after year in favor of all  
sorts of cheap-jack novelists and penny-wise compilers of  
college textbooks, was intrinsically insulting; it was at  
most as if the National Union had offered to admit a peasant.  
I.

That the fact that it might have been a disqualification or insult

for Hume to refuse the membership might have influenced him

to accept it. It seems constitutionally unable to hurt anybody's

feelings, even an organization's.

Hume, too, noted a distinction in intensity and idea in

the later books of Hume, a tendency to conform to current es-

tablishments.

"The praise such one-day masterpieces as Hume's 'Dissertation  
on the Passions' has done for the early heroes of the  
opera-house; he gave a bit of Wright's 'Modern Painting';  
he actually makes a gingerly survey to Frank Lloyd Wright,  
a Princeton professor. . . . The pressure in the genres  
can't keep up to 250 pounds forever. But that tide of  
fighting after a while, and seek ease in his inn." 2.

Let none of Hume's father could blind Hume to his great

influence in American literature.

"In an assembly of national critics who had long followed  
is a realistic portrait. Hume's father entered with a taste for  
literary art and more civilized, a learning which  
greater, and an artistic instinct more sensitive. He was  
and the father by inclination, and yet he became a  
reformer beyond compare. He anticipated criticism in  
American from the old slavery to slavery, and with it he  
anticipated all the new themselves." 3.

1. Prefaces: Third Series, by H. L. Hume, page 51
2. A Book of Prefaces, by H. L. Hume, page 135
3. Prefaces: Third Series, by H. L. Hume, page 65



Perhaps the best all-around estimation of Huneker is in George E. DeMille's Literary Criticism in America. Bernard Smith, in the article already quoted, says that DeMille's account is deification of Huneker. The choice of word is exaggerated; it is justification.

DeMille points the fact, obvious to anybody who has been at all concerned with Huneker, that he has been neglected and ignored:

"Every now and then some criticaster, of the sort who believe that authors can be ranked and graded like pupils in a class in elementary arithmetic, sets out to answer the question, Who is the great American critic? The answers to this question have been various and surprising. Lowell has been most often mentioned, but one also hears the names of Poe, Stedman, and even Margaret Fuller. No one, however, has as yet nominated for the honor James Huneker. Indeed, of all the major American critics, Huneker has been most persistently ignored. The qualities of the man are so obvious that this demands some attempt at explanation. This neglect is no doubt partly due to his lifelong connection with the daily papers--a connection that invites the academic epithet--journalistic. More of it is owing to Huneker's critical isolation. Most critics, the reader has probably noticed, speak not only for themselves, but for some group of creative writers, or some general movement of literary thought. They are party leaders, and the party helps them to fame. But Huneker belonged to no movement, advocated no reform, was touted by no clique, and it has been in the interest of no particular literary group to shout his praises. Only abroad has his importance been recognized. Remy de Gourmont, Paul Bourget, Georg Brandes, men whose mere awareness of the existence of an American critic meant a great deal, recorded their estimation of him in flattering terms. Nor was this undeserved. One can give him no higher praise than to say that in range of interest, in keenness of intelligence, in catholicity of taste, in brilliance of style, he reminds one constantly of the great French critics of the Nineteenth Century, of Sainte-Beuve and Taine and Le Maitre."

1.

DeMille traces Huneker's life in an attempt to account for



Perhaps the best all-around estimation of Buncker is in  
George A. Donnell's Literary Criticism in America. Buncker  
Smith, in the article already quoted, says that Donnell's ac-  
count is full of errors. The article of Smith is exag-  
gerated; it is just the opposite.  
Donnell points the fact, obvious to anybody who has been  
at all concerned with Buncker, that he has been neglected and  
ignored:

"Every now and then some criticizer, of the sort who be-  
lieve that literature can be judged and graded like games in  
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of an American critic meant a great deal, recorded their  
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that in range of interest, in richness of intelligence, in  
catholicity of taste, in brilliancy of style, he stands  
one constantly of the great French critics of the nine-  
teenth century, of Sainte-Beuve and Taine and Leconte."

Donnell traces Buncker's life in an attempt to account for



some of his critical characteristics. It is interesting to note that to the very agency to which Mr. Norman T. Byrne ascribes Huneker's supposed inability to judge the work of remiss Catholics, his Catholic up-bringing, DeMille ascribes his aloofness from Puritanism and the excesses of the anti-Puritanists.

"Both the Puritan, who shrieks 'Wipe it out,' and the anti-Puritan, who demands it everywhere and then attempts to prove that it does not exist, are untrue to the facts of literature and life. Huneker did neither; he was neither prudish nor prurient. He dealt with many authors who were under the moral ban--Wedekind, George Moore, d'Annunzio--but without descending to become either an apologist or a censor. The point is worth emphasizing, because this detachment, this balance, this moral tolerance, has been sadly lacking in most of our American critics." 1.

DeMille says Huneker's cosmopolitanism gave him valuable contacts abroad and width of judgment but that he remained as American as fried chicken in spite of it. 2.

Huneker's great vitality is acknowledged by DeMille. He says that critics possessed of such liveliness usually found schools or movements. It was Huneker's distinction that he was both alive and aloof and this combination gives him his peculiar excellence. Some of his work is unimportant but the best, according to DeMille, is comparable to the scholarly work of the "most cloistered recluse in critical history" and at the same time the work of a man intensely alive and eternally active in the world's pursuits. 3.

Huneker's interest in mysticism also tempered his vital exuberance that might have become mere barbarism and gave us a better-rounded personality. DeMille traces the importance of

1. Literary Criticism in America, by George E. DeMille, P. 210
2. Ibid., Page 213
3. Ibid., Page 214

some of his critical observations. It is interesting to  
note that to the very end, to which Mr. Newman's review  
states Newman's supposed inability to judge the work of his  
contemporaries, his verdict is unflinching. He writes that his  
work from Newman's and the excesses of the anti-Christians.

"Both the former, who writes 'What is it, and the latter,  
Pratt, who demands it everywhere and who expects to  
prove that it does not exist, are united in the fact of  
ignorance and life. Newman did neither; he was neither  
practical nor practical. He dealt with many matters who were  
under the moral law, but he did not. He was not a  
but without descending to such a level as to be regarded as a  
canon. The point is not in his mind, but in his  
treatment, his style, his moral balance, his own  
silly lack of sense of the American style." 5.

DeWitt says Newman's ecclesiasticalism gave him valuable  
insights abroad and wide of judgment and that he remained an  
American as far as his mind is concerned.

Newman's great vitality is acknowledged by DeWitt. He  
says that earlier possession of such liveliness usually found  
itself in Newman. It was Newman's distinction that he was  
both alive and alive and this was what gave him his great  
literary excellence. One of his work is unimpaired and the best,  
according to DeWitt, is undoubtedly the admirably done of the  
"most neglected volume in critical history" and to the same  
time the work of a man intensely alive and eternally active in  
the world's literature.

Newman's interest in spiritualism also rendered him vital  
existences that might have become mere caribans and gave us a  
better-rounded personality. DeWitt traces the importance of



the classical in music upon Huneker's musical equipment and says:

"One finds the same qualities in his work as a critic of painting--wide knowledge, classical backbone, liking for the new, the exotic, the strange." 1.

The same could be said of his literary criticism. DeMille points out the romanticism in his liking for the extremes of personality and the classicism of his interest in form and style. Huneker's criticism did not end here but went on to include an interest in ideas.

"He was equally interested in ideas, and was always careful to lay bare, usually without accepting or rejecting, the ideas of his authors. As a result of this breadth of interest, he avoided the unsatisfying narrowness of which one is often conscious when reading critics who stop at form or who deal only with ideas. One gets from Huneker a more complete and rounded picture of the author under consideration than from almost any other critic of literature." 2.

DeMille, too, notes Huneker's wide knowledge and scholarship. He cites an instance in Huneker's essays on Ibsen.

"Not only was Huneker, when the subject called for it, definitely scholarly in method. He had as wide a background of reading as the vast majority of professional scholars. One often hears the reproach leveled at journalistic critics that, while versed in modern literature, their knowledge stops at the year 1800. From such reproach Huneker is free. His reading can only be described as immense. Within the pages of Steeplejack--not a critical book, but an autobiography--one finds references to almost every classic author of importance. Here is a list gathered at random from a compass of about fifty pages--Cellini, Bossuet, Rabelais, Montaigne, Goethe, Aquinas, Dante, Cervantes, Bunyan, Horace. No American critic we have considered had read so widely, and few had read so well." 3.

Huneker, to DeMille, was an impressionist. He notes a lack of abstract thought in Huneker.

"In spite of his keen intellect, in spite of his great

1. Literary Criticism in America, by George E. DeMille, P. 221
2. Ibid., Page 231
3. Ibid., Page 224







interest in ideas, Huneker had little trace, I think, of the specifically philosophical type of mind--the type of mind that seeks to organize its ideas into a system, to base its judgments on general principles which, put together, make a more or less complete philosophy of literature. Unlike his French masters, unlike most of the American critics who had preceded him, Huneker was not given to discussions of literature and criticism in the abstract. Except for one chapter in Steeplejack, headed 'Criticism,' Huneker's pronouncements on literary theory were limited to very incidental remarks dropped in the course of his examinations of specific writers." 1.

Concerning the charge that Huneker was not greatly concerned with American writers DeMille has this to say:

"Writing from an international viewpoint, he naturally had little use for those American writers who loomed large in our eyes during the last century only because of our literary isolation. But both the American writers whom he mentions and those of whom he omits to speak are evidence of his power of selection, his ability to pick out the best. It is just for those American writers to whose reputations time has added that he shows due admiration." 2.

Huneker's breadth of viewpoint was not indiscriminate approval. Excellence was his criterion and he could distinguish its lack as well as its presence but he never indulged in castigation.

"He might have written excellent destructive criticism, armed as he was with knowledge, analytic power, humor, and the gift of slashing phrase. But his geniality and his utter lack of the reformer's zeal led him rather to pass over in silence the authors whose crimes outweighed their virtues. What critical fault-finding he did was only for the purpose of separating the real excellence of an author from the weaknesses and errors that block our clear view of that excellence. And it is a tribute to his discrimination that unlike Poe, he never lavished praise on an author undeserving of critical attention." 3.

The dramatic excellence of recent years, DeMille says, is largely due to Huneker's influence.

1. Literary Criticism in America, by George E. DeMille, P. 224
2. Ibid., Page 235
3. Ibid., Page 239







"Iconoclasts, which appeared in 1905, was the first piece of criticism in this country to give serious attention to the continental dramatists. It was also the first book by a major American critic to consider the drama as a subject for criticism." 1.

Other influences of Huneker, according to DeMille:

"His literary cosmopolitanism left its mark on nearly all succeeding American critics, most notably perhaps on Ernest Boyd, who seems at times a conscious imitator of Huneker. His impatience with moral attitudes in literary criticism has been adopted by the literary radicals of Mr. Mencken's school, men from whom he is in many respects far removed. But in general we may say that Huneker stands as a great critical monolith at the opening of the Twentieth Century." 2.

#### Huneker's Style and Its Influence Upon His Rating as an Impressionist

No estimation of Huneker's critical ability would be complete without some consideration of his style. More than with most writers it was indicative of its user.

"It was flamboyant, daring, dazzling, always erudite," to a writer in the Weekly Review of February 23, 1921. 3.

"The style is the book, as it is the man. It is arch, staccato, ironical, witty, galloping, playful, polygot, allusive," says Mencken. He speaks of Huneker's "skipping, pizzicato sentences." 4.

DeMille:

"His stylistic excellence was not the result of long and painful labor with the file; his brilliance was the natural and rapid utterance of a brilliant mind. He enjoyed doing tricks with words; he thought in clever sentences. He wrote in sentences; sometimes in sentences only." 5.

"Although Huneker's manner was always staccato, in his critical works this manner was under thorough control. Disjointed though his paragraphs may appear at first reading, this effect is often an optical illusion, the result of a dazzlement produced by the too continuous sparkle and glitter of his sentences. But beneath this coating of jewels there is a rigid steel structure. Every essay has

1. Literary Criticism in America, George E. DeMille, Page 242
2. Ibid., Page 242
3. Weekly Review, 2/23/21, Volume 4, Page 186
4. A Book of Prefaces, H. L. Mencken, Page 179
5. Literary Criticism in America, George E. DeMille, Page 231



"L'Esprit", which appeared in 1903, was the first piece of criticism in this country to give serious attention to the psychological element. It was also the first book by a major American critic to consider the drama as a subject for criticism."

Other influences of Huxley, according to Bellamy:

"His literary cosmopolitanism left its mark on nearly all succeeding American critics, most notably perhaps on Henry Boyd, who seems to have a conscious interest in Huxley's criticism. His acquaintance with Huxley's criticism in literary criticism has been asserted by the literary journals of Dr. Huxley's school, and from now on as in many respects the removal of Huxley's name from the list of literary standards as a great critical standard at the beginning of the twentieth century."

Huxley's Style and Its Influence Upon His Reading as an Intellectual

No estimation of Huxley's critical ability would be complete without some consideration of his style. More than with most writers it was indicative of his work.

"It was flamboyant, daring, dazzling, always audacious," so a writer in the weekly review of February 23, 1901.

"His style is the book, as it is the man. It is a style of spontaneity, of directness, of clarity, of vigor, of audacity," says Huxley. He speaks of Huxley's "eloquence" in his sentences.

Bellamy:

"His stylistic excellence was not the result of long and painful labor with the style; his excellence was the natural result of his brilliant mind. He enjoyed doing tricks with words; he thought in clever sentences. He wrote in sentences; sentences in sentences only."

"Although Huxley's manner was always spontaneous, in his critical work this manner was under conscious control. He stated that his paragraphs may appear as if they were the result of a haphazard process of the too continuous exercise of a hammer at his sentences. But Huxley's style is a result of a rigid social structure. Every essay has

1. Henry Huxley in America, George A. Bellamy, page 242
2. Weekly Review, 2/23/01, Volume 2, page 155
3. A Book of Huxley, Dr. E. Huxley, page 177
4. Literary Criticism in America, George A. Bellamy, page 221



has its definite mark, toward which it flies straight as an arrow." 1.

Regarding Huneker's manner of writing, Lawrence Gilman said:

"a prose style that was a new thing under the American sun, a flexible, flashing, audacious, richly communicative style, poetic and irreverent, witty and rhapsodical, swift and nervous, yet extraordinarily sumptuous and ornate. It was uncompromisingly personal, pungent, racy, yet it was sophisticated to the last degree, immensely amusing and stimulating in its verbal virtuosity, its riotous gusto." 2.

H. W. Boynton believes that Huneker's style was the outcome of his speed of composition:

"Such an output demanded fast writing and he wrote at a pace that only a journalist achieves; five thousand words a day for long stretches, a six-thousand-word magazine article once in six hours. . . . Such speed and such outwelling made for a fluent yet sinewy style." 3.

Pitts Sanborn, writing in the New York Globe, spoke of the

"extreme picturesqueness and animation of his writing, a style of pomp and splendor, touched with the rough hurly-burly of the vernacular, made every page he wrote an exciting and instructive inspiration to the reader." 4.

Huneker's vocabulary had "tropical exuberance" to a writer 5.  
in the New York Times.

William Marion Reedy said Huneker's sentences were like exploding torpedoes. "He makes you think in a series of jolts and jars but you think vividly for you come back to earth from your jump. Then you no sooner touch the ground but you're up again." 6.

Edwin Markham maintained, with DeMille, that this style had use for all its fantastic quality:

"Epithet and epigram must sustain and illumine the argument." 7.

Style always interested Huneker. He admired such different types of expression as Flaubert's and Edgar Saltus's. Yet,

1. Literary Criticism in America, by George E. DeMille, P. 232

2. North American Review of April, 1921, Volume 213, Page 556

3. Bostonia and Bohemia, by H. W. Boynton, Pages 227-228

4-5 Current Opinion, April 1921, Placing James Huneker as a Critic, Vol. 70, Page 534

6-7 Current Lit., 7/09, James Huneker, Super-Critic, Vol 47, P. 57





style was not all in all to him:

"I dreamed of becoming a writer but I realized that splendor of style without spiritual elevation is like a gewgaw in a pawnbroker's window." 1.

This arresting, stimulating, singing cascade of words is difficult to describe. The allusiveness of Huneker brings in all sorts of contrasts and comparisons. It is jerky and sedate in the same sentence, bedezined and stripped. It has the arresting attraction of the incongruous. The vocabulary dazzles. If the word hasn't been worn thin by the department-store advertisers, it has "personality," as every good style should.

His style was largely to blame for Huneker's rating as a pure impressionist. There is such sensation power in it; it is so alive that one cannot imagine its writer being anything else but an impression-sponge. The truth is that the style was Huneker's method, not his whold equipment.

#### Consideration of Critical Estimates of Huneker

Many types of writers, many divergent view-points are represented in the quoted opinions of Huneker as a critic--in itself an indication that the question of his influence is as yet undetermined--yet the majority of them coincide upon certain points.

#### Vitality

Nearly all of the authorities quoted agree upon Huneker's vital force, his verve, his brio. To Mencken it is his "gusto," to Norman T. Byrne, his "zest for life," his "freshness"; to Bernard Smith, his "sensuality"; to the New Republic writer,

1. Steeplejack, Volume 2, Page 5

style was not all in all to him:

"I speak of possessing a writer but I realized that style-  
don't style without spiritual strength; it is like a God-given  
in a person's style."

This statement, stimulating, striking, because of words is  
difficult to describe. The individuality of the style is  
all sorts of contrasts and comparisons. It is force and beauty  
in the same sentence, balanced and strident. It has the an-  
nouncing character of the locomotive. The vocabulary denotes  
if the word hasn't been worn thin by the department-store ad-  
vertisement, it has "personality," as every good style should.  
His style was largely to him for himself's reading as a  
pure impressionist. There is such suggestive power in it; it is  
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Huxley's method, not his whole equipment.

#### Consideration of Critical Estimates of Huxley

Many types of writers, many divergent view-points are  
represented in the quoted opinions of Huxley as a critic--in  
itself an indication that the question of his influence in the  
literary world--for the majority of men consider him as a  
main point.

#### Summary

Nearly all of the authorities passed upon Huxley's  
vital force, his nerve, his style. He seemed to be the "Gusto,"  
to Norman I. Brown, his "best for life," his "freshness"; to  
Bernard Bacon, his "sensuality"; to the New Republic writer,



his "Dionysiac force"; to Mr. Wickersham, his "ardent temperament"; to Royal Cortissoz, his "sensibility"; to DeMille, his "vitality"--all synonyms for the remarkable power to infuse life into the things about which he writes simply by his own exuberance and delight in living. Huneker was far from being an incarnation of Pollyanna. He was conscious of the tragedy at the heart of things human, the ennobling and terrifying struggle of man in a universe of whose birth and purpose he has no knowledge. Yet Huneker believed in getting as much out of life as one could. It is the only life one is sure of living so one may as well live it to the full. He would probably agree with Walpole: "It isn't life that matters; it's the courage ye bring to it." And that high-heartedness in living, that capacity for sensation and impression, that saturation with vital stimuli, he communicates to the reader. Life is an adventure, a sporting jaunt through an ever-changing landscape, among people of infinite human variation of appeal. Books are life; their authors, people. Life has degrading aspects but it has nobility and beauty. Merely being alive is a challenge. Huneker's pages radiate this verve. Everything alive was interesting to him in great or less degree, so we find him concerned with all kinds of human types.

#### Interest in the New and Unusual

Several of our critics, notably Bernard Smith, Mencken, and DeMille, note Huneker's concern with extremes of personality and art, with the exotic and bizarre. Such people and





things were interesting to Huneker because of their variation from the dead level of the average. The new, the fantastic, and the distinctive enlisted his attention. This, as has been indicated before in this thesis, is, as DeMille points out, a romantic tendency. Yet it was because of their fundamental, common humanity that they interested Huneker. If he had been a man without this human feeling, he would have dismissed many of them as crackpots.

### Learning

His great learning has been remarked by most of those who write about him. The equipment which made him an authority on any one of the arts is acknowledged generally. DeMille, Lewisohn, Boynton, even Pattee, agree that he could be extremely scholarly at times. When he is, the pill is irradiated with the vitamins of his own, eager temperament and coated with his most engaging style. Had he been of didactic leaning, his teaching would have been presented in fascinating guise. Maybe, however, if he had been, the pedagogue would have conquered and reduced the gorgeous batik of his stuff to homespun, the intriguing allusiveness to a monotonous one-two-three order of things. As it is, he is a teacher not of the type who imprints upon one's memory the eternal verities concerning two and two but the kind who inspires one to go out and read everything and everybody he mentions, to experience the literature of which he speaks.

things were interesting to human beings of a certain variety from the level of the average. The one, the Kantian, and the distinction related his attention. This, as has been indicated before in some cases, is, as we have pointed out, a scientific tendency. But it was because of their fundamental human nature that they interested themselves. It had been a man without this human feeling, he would have obtained many of these as epiphenomena.

Learning

His great learning has been rewarded by most of those who write about him. The argument which made him an authority on any one of the arts is not a very general one. He is, however, not only, even better, a man that he could be extremely scholarly at times. This he is, the bill is introduced with the victims of his own, eager temperament and coated with his own suggestive style. And he has of artistic learning, his reasoning would have been presented in fascinating style. However, it has been, the pedagogues would have concluded and reduced the pedagogues back of his ability to understand, the interesting alternatives to a philosopher's one-two-three style of things. As it is, he is a teacher not of the type who impress upon one's memory the eternal verities concerning two and two but the kind who impress one to go out and read everything and everything he mentions, to experience the literature of which he speaks.



## Humility

His deprecation of self and respect for certain authoritarians have not escaped the attention of those who write about him. Indeed, awareness of his humility is unavoidable because it sticks out all over him. It is a curious combination, the ability to champion all sorts of newcomers in the face of hostile attack, the preoccupation with proclaiming new viewpoints, and the humble submission to vested academicians and institutions. The two tendencies are irreconcilable in abstract consideration, yet human beings are often examples of this antithesis of characteristics. Huneker has always seemed to the writer like the brilliant, self-educated independent intellect which somehow often carries over a feeling of exaggerated respect for academic training. Such an intellect feels it has missed something vital in its inexperience of guided learning, forgetting that something real might have been lost as well as gained in the halls of culture. Formal education is respected and venerated; the self-educated man does not know it by actual contact; therefore, in his own estimation, who is he to judge? So he jacks up its pedestal a bit and polishes its halo brighter than the trained worshiper or the surrounding facts sanction.

Another cause of this humility is the fact that Huneker did not make the all-too-human and prevalent error of taking himself seriously. He could laugh at his own foibles. For instance, he writes from Weimar, September 25, 1904:

Summary

This degradation of self and respect for certain authors -  
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life itself, the preoccupation with protecting new viewpoints,  
and the humble admission to vested academic and literary  
claims. The two tendencies are irreconcilable in abstract con-  
sideration, yet human beings are often examples of this kind -  
thesis of characteristics. Huxley has always seemed to the  
writer like the brilliant, self-educated independent intellect  
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missed something vital in the experience of guided learning,  
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er than the shining wreath of the surrounding facts section.  
Another cause of this humility is the fact that Huxley did  
not make the self-top-human and prevalent error of taking himself  
seriously. He could laugh at his own foibles. For instance,

As written from Weymouth, September 25, 1904:



"Notwithstanding bad colds we are still in the ring and diving into Liszt treasures. I've secured the picture of the old Hausfrau who made Liszt's bed for thirty years. There's Journalism for you!" 1.

We find the following in Steeplejack:

"Les gros bataillons ont toujours raison," wrote Jomini, and this must be, not alone in the battlefield, but in peaceful life--charlatans are always in the majority, charlatans and imbeciles. I have spent my life in tilting at them, and at times I am afraid to look at the mirror." 2.

To himself, he was no crusader but an average human being. Such a realization, on anyone's part, should, of itself, entail a becoming humility, as well as a permissible pride.

### Impressionism

Feeling that Huneker was an impressionist is a matter for agreement among our writers. Some of them imply standards in the impressionism; more do not. The latter mistake the manner of the man for his whold equipment. The scope of knowledge and catholicity of interest which most of them find in Huneker were enough to furnish him with standards, even though they were merely those of comparison. But Huneker had more. He had the "feel" for excellence in all the arts and when he recorded his likes or dislikes they were tempered by his knowledge and sympathy with the best produced in any field of art.

### Subjectivity and Objectivity

Coincidental with the noting of his impressionism, is the corresponding mention of his lack of interest in general ideas. As we have shown in another part of this thesis, Huneker is open to this objection. Abstract ideas were interesting to Huneker

1. Letters, Page 33
2. Steeplejack, Volume 1, Page 207





but not as standards in criticism. For this reason, Huneker is said to have no standards. He judged each work of art in the light of the eternal values of excellence which he carried in his consciousness. Devotion to any artistic or philosophical creed would have marred the objectivity of his point of view. He who was subjective in his choices of authors for consideration was most objective in his judgments for he had no preconceived notions to get between him and a just evaluation.

### Influence Upon Literature and Criticism

The writers quoted are practically unanimous in their acknowledgement of the dynamic part which Huneker played, not only in American literature and criticism, but in American civilization.

To set him up as the embodiment of a new social class seems rather a fantastic thing to do, particularly if one has doubts as to the existence of that class. It wasn't that a new class arose at the time of the war; it was that the war and its aftermath changed the whole front of society. The era which preceded the war now seems like life in another incarnation. Values, standards, ways of life, social manners, economic outlook, changed in every level of society. In some cases we merely substituted new brands of Philistinism for old. In most others, the change seems fundamental. The modern tendency to venerate "pull" instead of "push," to disclaim individual responsibility for anything, to abandon the gentler ways of life would have pained Huneker. For all his liking for the new and

and not as standards in criticism. For this reason, however, in  
 order to have an appreciation of the work of art in the  
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 his consciousness. Hevelin is an artistic or philosophical  
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#### Influence Upon Literature and Criticism

The writer quoted the preceding paragraphs in their en-  
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 aftermath changed the whole trend of society. The era which  
 preceded was not even like life in another incarnation.  
 Values, standards, ways of life, social manners, economic out-  
 look, changed in every level of society. In some cases we more  
 fully anticipated new trends of civilization for old. In that  
 others, the change seems fundamental. The modern tendency to  
 separate "art" from "life" instead of "art" as a whole individual re-  
 sponsibility for anything, to abandon the gentler ways of life  
 would have pleased Hamaker. For all his liking for the new and



different, he had standards. Yet he was human enough to go along with life; he was "sport" enough to "take a chance" on to-morrows. If such a new class has arisen, Huneker could not have been its voice. The class and the mouthpiece would not match.

Though he had his romantic aspects, Huneker's whole tendency was away from the romantic standards and attitudes toward them which dominated American literature in his time. Yet he did not fall into the error of substituting a naturalistic romanticism for the one in vogue at that time. He brought new life blood and, more important than that, the will to live and the courage to do so minus Puritan restraint to a literature anaemic, thin, and feeble. Here again Huneker's normal, human balance is noticeable. He did not advocate excesses to counteract Puritanic aloofness. "Nothing too much" was his guiding principle here as elsewhere.

To hear that he had disciples would amuse him. His humility would be again outraged and his risibility would be aroused at the irony of his having literary descendants when he had eschewed all schools and movements. His influence was so great, however, that even those least conscious that he ever lived have been impelled by forces set in motion by him. The prediction which Bernard Smith makes--that Mencken will live because he took sides and uttered pronunciamientos, as Huneker never did, is open to dispute. It may be for that very reason that Huneker will live. The representative human expression of a non-combatant should outlast the literary polemics of his era.

different, as had the others. But he was human enough to go along with life; he was "sport" enough to "take a chance" on the future. It took a few years to arrive, but he could not have seen the value. The glass and the microscope would not reach.

Though he had his romantic aspects, Huxley's whole tendency was away from the romantic side and towards the scientific side which dominated American literature in his time. Yet he did not fall into the error of exaggerating a materialistic materialism for the one in which at that time, he brought new life blood and, more important than that, the will to live and the courage to do so. Huxley's position remained to a literature, scientific, plain, and useful. Huxley again Huxley's human balance is noticeable. He did not advocate excesses in a materialistic scientific materialism. "Nothing too much" was his guiding principle here as elsewhere.

To hear that Huxley's disciples would make life, his humility would be again betrayed and his visibility would be aroused at the irony of his having literary opponents when he had so many all schools and movements. His influence was so great, however, that even those who were not his disciples lived have been labelled by Huxley as in action by him. The prediction which Bernard Shaw makes--that Huxley will live because he took sides and showed his own way, as Huxley never did, is open to dispute. It may be too that very reason that Huxley will live. The Huxleyan human expression of a non-constant should assist the literary material of his era.



There is a particularly musty odor about a literary lost cause.

From our consideration of Huneker's ideas about the critic's place and method and from certain influences in his life, we could almost predict what his criticism would be like had we never read it. We should expect it to be subjective, allusive, verbally ingenious, alive with sense impression, tolerant, accurate, and inspiring. Such it is.

#### General Estimate of Huneker as a Critic

Huneker's ultimate rating lies in the future when the dust and turmoil of our day will have passed. For the present, De Mille has stated Huneker's case admirably:

"To understand all schools and to belong to none; to appreciate the good in literature under a thousand varying forms; to experience constant and unwearied delight in reading, and to express that delight, that gusto, in contagious terms; to penetrate with lightning keenness, the secret of an author's power; to reveal that secret in dazzling and unforgettable phrase--these are the achievements of a great critic. And above all these, to flash constantly upon the reader glimpses of a personality as rare, as fascinating, as that of any author whom he discusses, is to write criticism that is in itself literature. There are moods in which one is disposed to call Huneker the greatest of American critics. This is probably excessive. At any rate, he stands, with Lowell and Poe and James, in the very front rank of American criticism." 1.

1. Literary Criticism in America, by George E. DeMille, P. 243





### Summary

#### Evidence of Chapter II--Huneker Conforms to Humanistic Standards of Criticism Without Use of General Ideas

In Chapter II of this thesis we have measured Huneker's treatment of Bernard Shaw in Iconoclasts and of Henry James in Unicorns by the standards set by Norman Foerster in Toward Standards. To Mr. Foerster, the critic should have historical understanding, that of the race, place, time, and factual environment of the author; sympathetic understanding of the author's point of view and intention; and in the light of these complementary understandings, should judge the author's work both for the degree to which the author has fulfilled his intention and for the ultimate worth of the author's contribution.

With this equipment and purpose in mind, we have examined the articles on Shaw and James and have seen that they conform to the critical procedure and standards set for the humanistic critic by Mr. Foerster. Here we have noted that Huneker conforms to these standards of measure without stressing the "general ideas" or the philosophic abstractions dear to the Humanist.

#### Evidence of Chapter III--Huneker's Treatment of a Critical Subject Corresponds With That of a Humanistic Writer

For the purpose of a more exact appraisal of humanistic qualities and tendencies in Huneker we have compared Huneker's treatment of Baudelaire with that of an outstanding Humanist, Mr. T. S. Eliot.

By means of parallel references wherever possible we have shown that Huneker and Eliot are largely in agreement concerning

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Summary  
Evidence of Chapter II--Humboldt's View of Humanistic Education  
of Education without Use of Humanistic Ideas

In Chapter II of this thesis we have presented Humboldt's  
treatment of education in Germany and of many ideas in  
Humboldt's view by Humboldt in Germany  
standards. To Mr. Humboldt, the critic should have historical  
understanding, that of the past, place, time, and social en-  
vironment of the author; systematic understanding of the au-  
thor's point of view and intention; and in the light of these  
comprehensively understandings, should judge the author's work  
both for the degree to which the author has fulfilled his in-  
tention and for the value to which of the author's contribution.  
With this equipment and purpose in mind, we have examined  
the evidence on Humboldt and Humboldt and have seen that they conform  
to the critical procedure and standards set for the humanistic  
critic by Mr. Humboldt. Here we have noted that Humboldt con-  
forms to these standards of humanistic without stressing the "gen-  
eral ideas" or the philosophical considerations seen to the humanist.  
Evidence of Chapter III--Humboldt's Treatment of a Critical Edu-  
cational System with Use of a Human-  
istic Method

For the purpose of a more exact appraisal of humanistic  
criticism and education in Humboldt we have compared Humboldt's  
treatment of education with that of an outstanding humanist,  
Mr. T. S. Eliot.  
By means of parallel relations wherever possible we have  
shown that Humboldt and Eliot are largely in agreement concerning



Baudelaire. They agree upon Baudelaire's capacity for religious feeling, upon his humility, upon his lucidity of expression and upon his classicism. They are not wholly agreed concerning Baudelaire's attitude toward sin and his affliction of nerves and hysteria. The likeness of interpretation in the two essays is more apparent than the dissimilarity. Concerning the points in Baudelaire not covered by Eliot and treated by Huneker, we find that they are, in the main, humanistically regarded.

Evidence of Chapter IV--Huneker is More Humanistic than Romantic  
--But Not Entirely So Due to Lack of  
Interest in General Ideas

The fourth chapter has been devoted to a listing of the main ideas in the philosophy of modern Humanism with references from Huneker's work to illustrate or contradict them. These ideas have been stated without definition or discussion as they are part of the current coin of the humanistic marketplace and need no explanation that would be feasible within the limits of this thesis.

In this summary we shall list these ideas with indication as to whether Huneker is humanistic in these respects. For ease in visualization, we shall use tabular form.

<u>Humanistic Ideas</u>	<u>Huneker's Point of View</u>
Interest in the Classics	Humanistic
Seeing Life Sanely and Seeing It Whole	"
Anti-humanitarianism	"
Reforming Tendency	"
Lack of Acquisitive Instinct	"





Anti-Philistinism	Humanistic
Antipathy to Dogma	"
Idealism	"
Humility	"
Demon of the Absolute	"
Dualism	"
Religion	"
Freedom of the Will	Partly humanistic
Subjectivity--objectivity	Not humanistic but not wholly romantic

In respect to the latter quality we find that Huneker is not humanistic. On the other hand, he cannot be rated as definitely anti-humanistic in this regard. Huneker had standards but he did not evaluate his criticism in terms of philosophical abstractions. As a real Humanist, such a statement of general principles in relation to the author's work would have been his first concern, or, at least, a primary one. Without such a tendency on his part, we must rate Huneker as not a Humanist.

We then listed the stock ideas of Romanticism to see if any anti-humanistic ideas were in Huneker as romantic tendencies. The ideas with the verdicts follow:

<u>Romantic Ideas</u>	<u>Huneker's Point of View</u>
Natural Rights	Non-romantic
Perfectibility of Man	"
Temperamental Overflow	"
Inspiration	"





Sentimentalism	Non-romantic
Return to Nature	"
Anti-conventional Tendencies	"
Individuality	Romantic

The latter romantic tendency is important for the burden of our thesis as it is linked with the idea of subjectivity, the interest in persons rather than in principles. On the basis of our findings on this scale we cannot class Huneker as a Romanticist, but since the one romantic tendency we find is so closely linked to the fundamental humanistic ideal of objectivity, it but strengthens the case against Huneker as a Humanist.

#### Evidence of Chapter V--Huneker Is a Modified Impressionist and Not a Complete Humanist

Chapter V we have devoted to an examination of Huneker's credo regarding criticism and the opinions of his contemporaries concerning his critical output. Our consideration of Huneker's belief regarding the equipment of the critic and his function has sustained our previous findings that Huneker is not interested in general ideas. Here again, though, we see that his romantic ideas of impressionism are restrained by his feeling that the critic should have standards; that his aim was objectivity, though he approached it by subjective means.

In the consideration of the estimates of contemporaries such as Norman T. Byrne, Bernard Smith, Fred Lewis Pattee, H. W. Boynton, Benjamin De Casseres, George W. Wickersham, Thomas Moulton, Lawrence Gilman, H. L. Mencken and George E. DeMille and

Gentleness  
 Asymmetry to Nature  
 Anti-conventional tendencies  
 Individuality  
 Non-romantic  
 Romantic

The latter romantic tendency is inherent for the human  
 of our species as it is linked with the issue of subjectivity.  
 The interest in persons rather than in principles. On the one  
 side of our thinking on this issue we cannot escape however as a  
 romanticist, but since the one romantic tendency we find in so  
 closely linked to the fundamental humanistic ideal of objectivity.  
 It is but a recognition of the case against knowledge as a humanist.  
Evidence of Chapter V--Romanticism is a modified humanistic ideal  
for a humanist

Chapter V we have devoted to an examination of humanist  
 trends regarding criticism and the question of his contemporaries  
 concerning his critical output. Our consideration of humanist  
 belief regarding the separation of the art and his function  
 has explained our previous findings that humanist is not inter-  
 acted in general terms. Here again, though, we see that his  
 romantic issue of humanism is a trend of his feeling  
 that the critic should have personality; that his art was objec-  
 tivity, though he approached it by subjective means.  
 In the consideration of the activities of contemporaries  
 such as Norman L. Bryner, Bernard Smith, Fred Lewis Pattee, E. W.  
 Taylor, Benjamin H. Barker, George W. Stocker, Thomas  
 Wolfe, Lawrence Sanders, J. T. Menden and George K. Bellis and



writers in Current Opinion, The New Republic, The Literary Digest, and Current Literature, we have seen that Huneker's worth to American criticism is a matter of dispute. We find, however, common to the majority of the critics mentioned, agreement upon Huneker's qualities of vitality, interest in the new and unusual, his learning, his humility, his impressionism, his dislike of objectivity and his pioneer influence on American literature. One may well question whether a Humanist could have had the influence on American life and letters that Huneker did. In the nature of that influence, it would seem that he could not. Such work, as has been pointed out in the course of the argument, was necessarily that of a person more concerned with surface things than with fundamental principles. For the purpose of the thesis we can disregard this phase of Huneker's work for we are appraising actual qualities in Huneker, not his influence. Of the agreed-upon qualities in Huneker, his learning and humility probably belong on the humanistic scale and his vitality, his interest in the new and unusual, his impressionism, and his dislike of objectivity as a method on the romantic scale. The opinions of the critics merely add weight to our previously established contentions.

So we must conclude that Huneker was not a Humanist because he was not concerned in expressing an author's worth in abstract terms, in reducing it to a philosophical system, though he had all the other humanistic ideations in good measure. If, for this reason, he cannot be called a Humanist surely there is

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written in *Current Opinion*, *The New Republic*, *The Literary Digest*, and *Current Literature*, we have seen that Munster's work to American criticism is a matter of degree. We find, however, beyond the majority of the critics mentioned, agreement upon Munster's qualities of vitality, interest in the new and unusual, his freedom, his humility, his impressionism, his dislike of the positivistic and his present influence on American literature. And we will question whether a humanist could have had the influence on American life and letters that Munster did. In the course of that influence, it would seem that he could not. Such work as has been pointed out in the course of the argument, was necessarily that of a person more concerned with surface things than with fundamental principles. For the purpose of the thesis we now disregard this phase of Munster's work for we are approaching a final period in Munster, not his influence. Of the spread-upon qualities in Munster, his learning and his ability probably depend on the humanistic scale and his vitality. His interest in the new and unusual, his impressionism, and his dislike of objectivity as a method on the romantic scale. The influence of the critics merely add weight to our previously established conclusions.

So we must conclude that Munster was not a humanist because he was not concerned in expressing an author's work in objective terms, in reducing it to a philosophical system, though he had all the other humanistic theories in good measure. If, for this reason, he cannot be called a humanist, we may leave him



reason enough to clear him of the charge of pure impressionism.

A man who could write:

"Wasn't it George Saintsbury who once remarked that all discussion of contemporaries is conversation, not criticism? . . . . If I say I hate it or I like it that is only a personal expression, not a criticism standing foursquare. I fear I subscribe to the truth of Mr. Saintsbury's epigram."  
1.

is not likely to be a pure impressionist. Besides, if one wants actualities instead of interpretations, there is the body of Huneker's criticism for evidence.

#### Conclusion--Huneker a "humanist" Rather Than a Humanist

In excluding Huneker from Humanism one is reminded of the barring of Shakespeare by certain of the Humanists on the grounds that he did not have a proportional human viewpoint; that his characters were types of aberrational as well as rational human beings; that he exercised no discrimination in his choices of people or theme. This is certainly carrying out a conviction to a dead letter. Shakespeare can perhaps be called the greatest "humanist" because of his concern with all kinds of human beings and human problems; and Huneker, mutatis mutandis, can also be called a "humanist," if not a Humanist. If, as T. S. Eliot maintains, "there is no humanistic habit"; that Humanism is merely the state of mind of a few persons in a few places at  
2.

a few times; we might even presume to use the capital H. in linking the word, humanist, to Huneker. Samuel Butler says somewhere that it doesn't matter what profession of religion or irreligion a man may make, provided he doesn't carry it out to

1. Ivory Apes and Peacocks, Pages 113-114

2. For Lancelot Andrewes, by T. S. Eliot, Page 145

reason enough to state him of the charge of being impressionist.

And the same critic:

"What is George Bernard Shaw's attitude towards the impressionist movement of contemporary literature, and criticism? . . . I say I have to say that it is only a name, and not a movement, and I do not think it is a name. I have a suggestion to the effect of Mr. Bernard Shaw's opinion."

It is not likely to be a pure impressionist. Besides, if one were

impressionist instead of impressionist, there is the fact of

impressionist's criticism for evidence.

Impressionism--Shaw's "Humanism" rather than a "Humanist"

In explaining Shaw's humanism one is reminded of the

fact that Shakespeare by contrast of the humanism on one

grounds that he did not have a proportionally human viewpoint;

that his characters were types of humanism as well as real

at human beings; that he showed no discrimination in his

choice of people or themes. This is certainly carrying out a

revolution to a dead letter. Shakespeare can hardly be called

the greatest "humanist" because of his concern with all kinds of

human beings and human problems; and humanism, artistic humanism,

can also be called a "humanism," if not a humanism. It is a

kind of humanism, "there is no humanistic habit"; that humanism

is merely the state of mind of a few persons in a few places at

a few times; we might even presume to use the capital H. in

linking the word, humanism, to humanism. Samuel Butler says

somewhere that it doesn't matter what profession of religion or

philosophy a man may make, provided he doesn't carry it out to



the last analysis or insist upon it to the utmost, so we shall be content with calling Huneker a humanist and not a Humanist. In his great aversion to labels, I really believe he would like it better that way.

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There is

humanist and Humanist

111  
The last analysis of history when it is the worst, so we shall  
be content with calling history a humanist and not a humanist.  
In his great survey of history, I really believe he would like  
it best in the end.



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American Mercury	<u>Selections from Huneker's Letters</u> , January 1924
Current Literature	<u>James Huneker Super-Critic</u> , July 1909
Current Opinion	<u>Placing James Huneker as a Critic</u> , April 1921
Literary Digest	<u>James G. Huneker as a Critic</u> , March 5, 1921
The New Republic	<u>James Huneker</u> , February 23, 1921
The Weekly Review	<u>James Gibbons Huneker</u> , February 23, 1921

PERIODICALS  
(continued)

Selections from Huxley's Letters, January 1902	American Literary
James Huxley, <u>Under-World</u> , July 1902	Current Literature
James Huxley as a Critic, April 1901	Current Opinion
James G. Huxley as a Critic, March 5, 1901	Literary Digest
James Huxley, February 22, 1901	The New Republic
James Huxley, February 22, 1901	The Weekly Review



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